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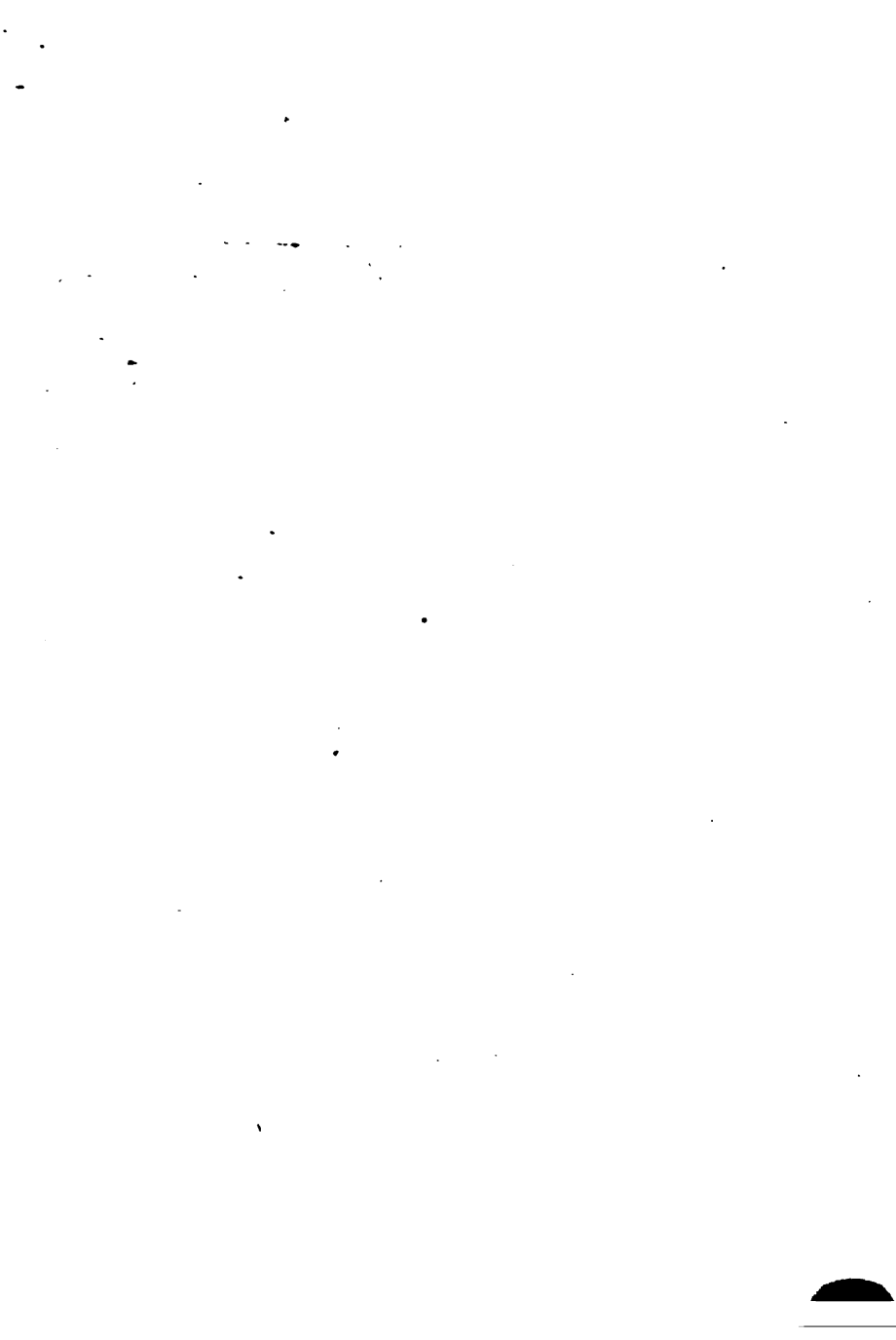
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**IS HELL ETERNAL**  
**or**  
**WILL GOD'S PLAN FAIL?**



# Is Hell Eternal *or* Will God's Plan Fail?

By  
**REV. CHARLES H. PRIDGEON, M.A.**  
President and Founder of the Pittsburgh Bible Institute



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## PREFACE

**THIS** book is written for the thoughtful man or woman who has had difficulty with the doctrine of endless punishment as usually taught.

It aims to be constructive and is written from the orthodox standpoint. In reference to the eternality of punishment it takes issue.

It holds up the Christ and His Cross and its author trusts that from its perusal there may result the salvation of souls and the comfort of many who have lost loved ones who died whether in or out of Christ, yet "loved long since and lost awhile."

It is animated by the spirit of love even tho its conviction is strong that its position is in accord with a true translation and interpretation of the Word of God.

It does not make light of sin nor of its dire consequences and it holds that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," not only in this life but also in that which is to come.

It has no apology to offer for the truth which it presents, it rejoices in it. Its author is, however, conscious of his shortcomings and wishes that he could have done the work better, but as he believes God bade, he can do nothing but obey.

The scientific world has been somewhat startled by the theory of relativity which Dr. Einstein has recently promulgated. It is largely acknowledged that by this theory alone can many of the new problems of light and electro-dynamics find solution. Without making any pronouncement on this subject, the author may be permitted to point out an analogy which may apply to his own field. He is convinced that the consistent recognition of the difference between time and eternity will accomplish for Biblical problems all that the new theory promises to do for natural science.

The author once visited a silver mine where the shaft had been sunk three hundred feet and where for years the miners had dug untold riches. One day it was proposed that they go deeper, so down and down they dug and blasted until a depth of a thousand feet was reached. There a wondrous find was made, a new flow of the precious mineral in a large and wealthy vein.

The author believes that the upper veins of truth have been fairly well worked in the past and their yield has been exceedingly rich, but many questions still remain unanswered and he hails with delight the workmen of God who have gone deeper. He takes no honor to himself—since others have shown the way—if he digs a little and finds another flow of precious truth.

In this book he tries to tell principally of the things which he has discovered at the greater

depth. Here was a satisfaction that he found nowhere else, a God of Love was vindicated, His plan accomplished, and all waste material was saved for God. He does not think that he has gone as far as others have gone and will go and yet he longs that all may share what he has gained.

He realizes that there are still "blessings of the deep that lieth under."

"A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height,  
And our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight."

The author desires to express thanksgiving to God, whose enabling alone made the writing of this book possible in the midst of many other duties.

He would also express appreciation of the help and fellowship of his wife, of the members of the faculty of the Pittsburgh Bible Institute, and of other friends who have aided him in its preparation for the press.

Any repetition in the different chapters is for completeness of thought, as some of them may be published separately by the Institute.

PITTSBURGH, PA.,  
August, 1920.

C. H. P.



## I

### BARRIERS TO A CANDID CONSIDERATION

THE spirit of prejudice stands in the way of all new views of truth. Prejudice has been defined as "a judgment or opinion formed without due examination of the facts or reasons that are essential to a just and impartial determination."

In Bunyan's *Holy War*, Mr. Prejudice, with sixty deaf men, keeps Ear-gate, one of the most important gates of entry to the city of Mansoul. It is prejudice that blinds the eye, stops the ear, misunderstands and misinterprets everything that comes its way. Its state of mind is not founded on facts but on some feeling of dislike or something of self-interest.

There are those who will not accept any truth unless it is ministered in a certain conventional manner or supported by certain great names. The question "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" shows this same principle of partiality. One would suppose that it was written in the Word that "Whoso believeth in eternal punishment shall be saved." Our point of fellowship and union is in the Lord Jesus Christ; and even if many do not accept our teaching on the points



before us, we will not pronounce any anathema against them or say they are not Christians, even tho we could not take their standpoint without reflecting on the very person and character of God.

One lad said to another whose mother had been washing a bit of linen, "I see that your mother is a washer-woman." The other replied, "If I saw your mother pulling your little brother's wagon, ought I call her a horse?"

It is inconsistent with justice to put in the same class all who may profess the same doctrine. A further question needs to be first settled; *viz.*, upon what grounds and for what reasons is this particular truth held? We might 'speak of two men who were in favor of the World War just waged. One of them favored it from reasons of patriotism and the desire to aid his fellow man. He proved this by the sacrificing of himself in the cause. The other favored it because he saw in it an opportunity to make a large sum of money. These two men profest faith in the same thing, but the reason and ground of their stand was so diverse that their names should not be mentioned in the same breath. The one acted from a lofty motive, the other from a selfish one.

One of the great religious leaders of our day has said:

"The quality of men is shown not so much by the opinion they hold, as by the grounds upon which they hold them, by the

arguments upon which those opinions rest in their minds. Men may hold the greatest of truths in a feeble way and upon the most unsubstantial evidence. Men may believe, for instance, in the Being of God because they have been told that it is true or because they want to believe it. On the other hand, men may believe the simplest and commonest of truths on the most solemn and majestic grounds . . . So it seems that man's greatness is decided, not by the opinions which they hold, but by the kinds of evidence on which and by the spirit in which they hold them."

We may not feel complimented in being classed with those who do not believe in the doctrine of eternal punishment because they dimly suppose that by denying the doctrine they may make a way of escape; nor do we desire to be classed with those who make light of sin; nor with those who found all their teaching on purely naturalistic grounds, or manufacture them from their own imagining; nor with those who belittle our Lord and His sacrifice on the cross; nor with those who do not believe that what "a man soweth that shall he also reap"; nor with those who do not think that any change is necessary in man in order to be saved; nor with those who do not believe in any hell at all, or in an inadequate one. To all these loose ideas we hope that we are a stranger.

Unless our faith is founded on a fair interpretation of the Word of God, not in part, but in its entirety; unless there is a vindication of God's wisdom, power, justice, and love; unless it has the "Amen" of a chastened Christian conscious-

ness; unless it makes for righteousness and magnifies the cross of Christ; unless it solves doubt, dries a tear, comforts broken hearts, wins souls, and sanctifies believers; unless it also has practical spiritual fruit, we reject and refuse it; but if it has all of these and more, then let us believe it, and even if we have to suffer for it, let us suffer with joy, for it is worth it a thousand times.

One of the words that Prejudice uses is, "That is unorthodox." Orthodoxy means "right thinking"; to nearly every one it has come to mean "to think as I do."

There is no room in a crystallized orthodoxy to learn anything more from the Word of God than it has learned. We are not affirming that stability in doctrine is not desirable; neither are we discounting the fact that we owe an immeasurable debt to our forefathers and to the Church Fathers; but after acknowledging this, there is room for progress. Unless there are deepenings and enlargement, vital and new openings of truth, orthodoxy becomes dead.

It is not strange in our day to learn fresh truth in the field of nature. It does not surprize us when scientific discoveries are made through new applications of old principles and larger generalization of truth. It ought not to be counted strange that new discoveries might be found in God's Word and that modification of some things which we regarded as truth had to be made. In this

way alone will truth remain living and have power. If this process is stopt, the Word of God will become a dead letter.

If there were no truth in the religious systems which some despise, they would die. The fact of their life and power can not be attributed alone to the forces of darkness; there is another factor. Usually there is some truth that has been neglected, some truth twisted or warped, else there would not be any need met by the systems that are so largely false.

Christianity centers in the person and work of the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the touchstone and power of all truth. Any seeming truth that does not glorify Him is counterfeit, or only partly true. To us there seems to be a grave need for those who hold the great fundamentals concerning the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ—the full Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture; the necessity of Regeneration; the doctrine of Rewards and of Punishments—to assemble all the light from God's Word that removes the difficulties from the doctrine of eternal torment as usually held, and in this way make a glorious harmony.

We earnestly stand for the right of private judgment and guidance of God in an illuminated conscience, yet, at the same time, we desire to apprehend "with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know

the love of Christ which passeth knowledge''  
(Eph. 3:18, 19).

Prejudice stands in the way of even a conservative and constructive advance. May God's Holy Spirit alone be our Teacher.

## II

### THE DOCTRINE OF RESERVE AN ENEMY OF TRUTH

IF there is one cause more than any other that has blocked and sometimes blighted the propagation and development of divine truth, it is the doctrine of reserve.

This doctrine teaches that it is right to withhold, to disguise and, if necessary, to deny faith in any truth, if there is sufficient cause. This doctrine has prevailed all down the ages to a greater or less degree, and some of the godliest saints and theologians have been its slaves. They reason, "It is all right to hold these deeper things ourselves, even if they differ from the popular conception. Such things will not hurt us, but the people are not ready for them. It will work them great injury; these are professional secrets."

The first reason that is given is the general statement of the ignorance of the laity upon spiritual questions, except the more primary ones. It is, therefore, wise, they say, not to confuse or confound the common people. It is true that there are many who are not sufficiently versed in the Word of God to be able to form an unbiased judgment, but in the present day of almost universal education this consideration does not have the

same force as of old. A further fact needs to be given due weight, *viz.*, that when it comes to the understanding of spiritual things, the one who may have little of a worldly education may be "rich in faith" and have large and just conceptions of spiritual things. Even if wisdom is to be used in the method and amount of truth to be disclosed, there is no necessity for deception nor misrepresentation.

When Abraham Lincoln determined to free the slaves, an intimate friend of his sent him a telegram: "From Richard Yates to Abraham Lincoln. Dear Abraham,—Pause! The people are not ready for it." The President sent a reply that has been described as the finest message ever sent over the wires. "From Abraham Lincoln to Richard Yates. Dear Dick,—Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

Often the reason that lies back of the concealment is lack of courage, and fear of the consequences. In times of great persecution it certainly would be easy to follow some devious path of Christian casuistry in order to escape torture, imprisonment, suffering, or death. Even in our time, altho much of the crude and outward persecution has passed, that which remains may be none the less cruel and naturally provocative of fear. As one has aptly said:

"There are other forms of dogmatic bondage besides fear of death. The halter and the stake have indeed been banished

. . . But the more hidden and insidious forms of persecution—suspicion, prejudice, calumny—have by no means lost their power; and they are doing their enslaving work (as truly and effectually to-day) within the limits of the Church as ever in its history.”

Many a preacher has to wear a muzzle on certain questions or lose his church and his living. Even if he cares little for his own welfare, that of his wife and children holds him strongly. It takes courage from God and supernatural grace to step out trusting God alone, but He will honor every one who honors Him. The rights of conscience and of private judgment are admitted in theory by nearly all, but not in practise.

“A great error of the Church has always been its assumption of authority over the souls of men in all matters of faith and dogma; and the natural fruit of dogmatic authority has always been, and always will be, insincerity, hypocrisy, cant, and all their evil brood. Until that yoke is completely broken everywhere in Christendom, its results are bound to appear.”<sup>1</sup>

May God raise up more of those who will be willing to stand for what they believe to be the truth of God no matter what it costs, and deliver His children from all deceit and hypocrisy!

Away with such bondage! Away with such deception! The old question arises again, “Is a lie ever justifiable?” To this all courageous, honest men make answer, “No.” At the same time, we

<sup>1</sup> Professor Levi L. Paine in *The Ethnic Trinities*, page 315 (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). We are not approving the theological conclusion of this book, but the courageous honesty of its author is highly refreshing.



insist that tact and wisdom must be exercised in the propagation of truth, but not to the extent of lying. No matter if others yield to such deception and sin, let us be truthful. It is true it often takes courage to tell the truth, but God's Word stands sure, that, "Them that honor Me I will honor" (I Sam. 2:30). God honors with more truth and more faith and more power, when one takes his freedom in God and stands for all he believes. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). How many are blessed through such a courageous stand! Even hardships that have to be endured, that promised to be so hard, are found easy, "For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). Ecclesiastical bodies should allow such freedom to their representatives, just so the essential truths of salvation are held intact. Whosoever trusts the Lord Jesus Christ has salvation. This is our foundation of faith and fellowship. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

### III

#### WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES

WE are conservative enough to prefer to read the King James version of the English Bible rather than other translations. This is because its phraseology and structure have been wrought into our life and into the texture of the English language. We also know that in very many instances it is not an accurate representation of the original Greek and Hebrew and yet for most practical purposes it is admirable.

We will point out that on a few lines its translation is not clearly given. We are not arguing against its general correctness by asking that such parts should have a more correct rendering.

There are those who think that any suggestions along this path are irreverent and deny the inspiration of the Scriptures. We beg to say, however, that it is the original in Greek and Hebrew that is our inspired standard, and that the English or French or German, etc., are only translations, and are inspired just so far as they express the actual thought of these originals. When scholars see that another word will better translate the thought or word of the original, and such correction is

made, they are establishing rather than questioning the plenary inspiration of God's Word. This point needs to be fully appreciated and it will preclude any remark like that of the woman who said that the English Bible was good enough for Paul and it was good enough for her. She either did not know or did not think that Paul did not have the Bible in English, but had it only in the original languages. We sympathize in part with her reverence for God's Word.

Some of the discrepancies in our English Bible are caused by the changes in the usages of words that normally take place in the course of time; and others, by the bias of the translator.

The word "prevent" (1 Thess. 4:15) in the English Bible did not mean what it means now; but at the time of the King James version it meant "to precede."

The word "damnation" (1 Cor. 11:29) is too strong for the Greek word; it should always be rendered "condemnation." This verse then has a plain meaning. Also, if one against his conscience eat meat offered to idols, he is "damned if he eat" (Rom. 14:23). It should be, he is "condemned." In this case, and in all others, the word should be translated "condemned."

As we take up different words we will more accurately translate the few words that need alteration, which we have found through many years of

reading and teaching the Bible in the original languages as well as in English.

F. W. Faber thus writes of the English Bible :

"The uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible ! It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells which convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the author of national seriousness. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its phrases. The power of all the griefs and trials of man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments ; and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle and pure and penitent and good, speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but, oh, how intelligible voice of his guardian angel ; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant, with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

Besides a mere literal translation of the Bible there are several important things which have to be taken into consideration in order to the correct understanding and interpretation of the Scripture, some of which are not always given due consideration.

First, the study of the idioms of both the Hebrew and the Greek. A literal translation of a text from another language may give exactly an opposite meaning to an English reader. For instance, in Greek two negatives do not make an affirmative but a stronger negative. In English

it is quite the contrary: they make an affirmative.

Many Hebrew idioms of the Old Testament are carried into the New Testament Greek. For example, the active voice of a verb is frequently used in the sense of permission, and where this is not recognized as an idiom, it makes havoc with a true conception of God, attributing all kinds of evil to Him, and is contradictory to thousands of other statements. He is thus incorrectly made the Author of evil. The proper translation of the idiom corrects all this.

There are many expressions also that are used of God speaking after the manner of men. It is not proper to understand them in the letter. It is rather the condescension of the eternal God stooping down to our apprehension. When thus understood, all difficulty disappears.

Again there are many passages of Scripture which speak of things as they seem, rather than as they are. We often do this. We say, "The sun rises and sets," when we know better; but we are simply referring to the apparent and not to the real. In one passage of the Psalms, God is called upon as if He were asleep (Ps. 44); while in another we are told that He never slumbers nor sleeps. We know that the first is speaking according to the way it seems and not according to the fact. In oriental speech, this kind of thing is far more frequent than in English.

We quote from the eloquent and quaint John

Donne, of the seventeenth century, and modernize a few of his words (he is probably making his own translation of the passages quoted from the Bible):

"But some of those inordinate passions and perturbations, excesses and defects of man, are imputed to God, by the Holy Ghost in the Scripture. For so laziness and drowsiness is imputed to God; (Awake Lord, why sleepest Thou? Ps. 44:23). So corruptibleness, and deterioration, and growing worse by ill company, is imputed to God; God is said to grow froward with the froward, and He learns to go crookedly with them that go crookedly (Ps. 18:26). And prodigality and wastefulness is imputed to God; (Thou sellest Thy people for naught, and dost not increase Thy wealth by their price (Ps. 44:12). So sudden and hasty choler; (Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish in brief anger, tho His wrath be kindled but a little.) And then, illimited and boundless anger, a vindicative irreconcilableness is imputed to God; (I was but a little displeased (but it is otherwise now) I am very sore displeased. Zech. 1:15). So there is devouring wrath; (Wrath that consumes like stubble. Ex. 15:7). So there is wrath multiplied (Plagues renewed and indignation increased. Job 10:17). So God Himself expresses it (I will fight against you in anger and in fury. Jer. 21:5). And so for His inexorable-ness, His irreconcilableness, (O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of Thy people? Ps. 80:4)—God's own people praying to their own God, and yet their God irreconcilable to them. Scorn and contempt is imputed to God; which is one of the most enormous, and disproportioned weaknesses in man; that a worm that crawls in the dust, that a grain of dust that is hurried with every blast of wind, should find anything so much inferior to itself as to scorn it, to deride it, to condemn it; yet scorn, and derision and contempt is imputed to God (He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Ps. 2:4). And again (I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. Prov. 1:26). Nay beloved, even inebria-

tion, excess in that kind, drunkenness which the Holy Ghost hath mingled in the expressing of God's proceedings with man; for God does not threaten to make His enemies drunk (and to make others drunk is a circumstance of drunkenness). So Jerusalem being in His displeasure complains (He hath made me drunk with wormwood. Lam. 3:15). And again, (They shall be drunk with their own blood, as with new wine. Isa. 49:26). Not only to express His plentiful mercy to His friends and servants, does God take that metaphor (I will make the soul of the priest drunk; fill it, satiate it). And again, (I will make the weary soul, and the sorrowful soul drunk. Jer. 31:14, 25). But not only this (tho in all this God has a hand) not only toward others; but God in His own behalf complains of the scant and penurious sacrificer (Thou hast not made me drunk with Thy sacrifices). And yet, tho for the better applying of God to the understanding of man, the Holy Ghost imputes to God these excesses and defects of man (laziness and drowsiness, deterioration, corruptibleness by ill conversation, prodigality and wastefulness, sudden choler, long irreconcilableness, scorn, inebriation and many others) in the Scripture."

All this is only human and oriental figures of speech. Not one of them is true of God, it only appears to be so.

A translator of the Bible ought to be perfectly familiar with all the idioms of the original languages and also of the idioms of the language into which he translates, or he will make terrible confusion. Note the great number of idioms that are pointed out by Dr. Robert Young in the introductory pages of his admirable concordance to the Bible.

Another necessary study that has been too much neglected in the interpretation of Scripture is the

study of the figures of speech. We know of a few books that have attempted to perform thoroughly this service for the English language. There is only one book that we know of in English,<sup>1</sup> and of only one<sup>2</sup> that has in any adequate degree done the same for the Bible. Between two and three hundred figures of speech are discusst and illustrated. There is certainly room for further work on this important line. The Bible is eminently a figurative book, and its figures are principally oriental. Right interpretation or translation demands the mastery of Bible figures.

Just one illustration: when in Daniel's time the King was addrest, they said, "O King, live forever." No oriental would mean literally "forever," but only a long time. The "forevers" of Scripture all come in the same class, for we will show that they all refer to time or portions of time, and time is to come to an end. (See Chapter on The Ages Presented, and that on Eternity Is Not Time.)

Another fact that needs especial mention is that the Bible is a graded book; not always graded so that the earlier books are less profound than the later. This is in part true, but only in part. Scattered through the Word are truths for the simple

<sup>1</sup> *The Might and Mirth of Literature. A Treatise on Figurative Language*, by John Walker Vllant Macbeth (Harper & Bros., New York, 1875).

<sup>2</sup> *Figures of Speech used in the Bible*, by E. W. Bullinger, D.D. (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London).



minds, which will be understood and appropriated by the beginners. Then also scattered through its pages are truths that are a little more advanced and will afford help to the man and woman of average intelligence. And then all stages of truth are found till the greatest intellects may be satisfied and yet inspired for further discoveries. The Word of God is exactly parallel to nature; nature is still yielding her secrets to the diligent student. Likewise the Word of God has still blessed discoveries awaiting the faith and patience and skill of those who seek, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to find them.

Beside the graded stratifications of truth that lie all through the Word of God, there is also a marked progress of doctrine. The failure to discern this progress of doctrine in the Word has led to erroneous or imperfect understanding of God's Word. On the subject of the future life, when we come to Israel, we find that the promises held out to the faithful were largely those that pertain to this life, with just enough of the other spiritual promises of the future life to imply its real existence and to awaken desire for further light. This light kept on increasing till life and incorruptibility were brought out into clearness of light in the New Testament.

It goes without saying that any book or passage of Scripture can be understood only by discerning its own special standpoint. It makes much differ-

ence who the speaker is. The Bible is fully inspired, but if the speaker is untrue the Bible will record correctly what he says but does not ask you to believe his untruth. The Bible records even what Satan says, but that does not mean that Satan is telling the whole truth. We need an inspired and accurate record of sin and its principles to understand it correctly. It is not proper to open the Bible and quote a text to prove a point without observing who is speaking and what his standpoint is. One might open the book of Job and quote from some of Job's friends. We know that some of the things they said were true and some not. In fact, many things were so erroneous that in the end, when Job was right with God, he had to pray for these same friends.

The book of Ecclesiastes is often quoted in reference to the future life. Its sphere of observation is entirely worldly and belongs to this present life. Twenty-nine times it indicates this fact by using the expression "under the sun." If we look at things from this standpoint it would seem that there was no future life and therefore no difference between the death of a man and a beast. From this standpoint, death means the body in the grave and nothing more and we could say in its words that then "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." This is looking at life only from the standpoint of this present world.

Also that little sentence, "In the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." This is a figurative way of illustrating the law of sowing and reaping. Note the context, where you sow you reap and what you sow you reap. Farther than this principle this text is not referring to human destiny. Even if it did we could accept it. It would then be another way of saying that just in the condition a man leaves this world, in that state he arrives in the next. But neither the tree nor the man, tho they remain there long, will abide there for eternity, for every state has its changes. We shall see that every state is meant for progress and preparation for a final eternity.

We like to think of the book of Ecclesiastes as written by Solomon after his backsliding and worldliness were ended. He tells us that he looked at life and tried it from this worldly standpoint. He tells of his riches and the great experiments he made because of his almost limitless resources. He says that he ran the whole gamut of worldliness and pleasure, endeavoring at the same time to keep his head balanced that he might see what was in it all. He bears testimony that there is nothing in it, and that it is all vanity. He desires his lesson to profit others for he asks, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" He then concludes his book by telling us that from the worldly, outward standpoint, even if there was nothing beyond this life, it is far better to reverence

God and keep His commandments. The book of Ecclesiastes is inspired, but has to be understood from its proper standpoint. It is not proper to quote it in any other way.

The principles here referred to are but some of those that are often either not thought of or ignored, but which are absolutely necessary to a true understanding of God's Word.

## IV

### SOME INSURMOUNTABLE DIFFICULTIES

THERE are insurmountable difficulties that stand in the way of faith in the doctrine of endless punishment. Is is a fact that, altho its acceptance is accounted by many one of the tests of orthodoxy, it is emphasized at the present day by only a very few. If it really is true, it should be proclaimed by every one; in fact, there should never be any sermon preached without making this doctrine a part of it. Its advocates will admit that there are even whole books in the Bible that contain no mention of it. When we remember that many of these books were issued separately at first, and that a community might have only one or two of them, and in them there would be no clear statement of the utter and forever hopelessness of any one dying out of Christ,—this certainly seems surpassingly strange.

If this doctrine were really true, as it is profest, every believer ought to give up all the ordinary pursuits of life, even the necessary ones, and spend his whole time in warning the impenitent; that is what would be done if a fire that threatened every one were to break out in our city or country; but this alarm is rarely, if ever, shown

by believers who are in their right minds. The fact is that, altho it is profest by most Christians, it is not believed by them with any conviction or they would act differently. Edwards and Finney did not think that eternal punishment was rightly proclaimed in a community unless some went insane. Indeed, if it were realized in all its horrors and suffering it would make of our religion a hideous nightmare. Most Christians would be victims of melancholia, and the whole world would become either demented or atheistic.

We fear any doctrine that does not commend itself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God," for such a conscience quickened and illumined by the Holy Spirit is the highest light that man has; and if any so-called truth of God does not commend itself to this kind of conscience, something is the matter with it. Most preachers and teachers who proclaim the doctrine of eternal punishment say again and again, "We wish this were not so," or, "We would change this, if we could." They are by such remarks witnessing to the fact that they do not have the full backing of their own conscience, and unconsciously they are criticizing God's government and character. (See Chapter on Conscience Must Be Satisfied.)

Dr. Albert Barnes, the noted preacher and commentator, thus expresses himself:

"That the immortal mind should be allowed to jeopardize its infinite welfare; and that trifles should be allowed to draw it

away from God and virtue and heaven; that any should suffer forever, lingering on in hopeless despair, and rolling amidst infinite torments without the possibility of alleviation and without end; that since God *can* save men, and *will* save a part He has not purposed to save all; that on the supposition that the atonement is ample, and that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all and every sin, it is not in fact applied to all. That, in a word, a God who claims to be worthy of the confidence of the universe, and to be a Being of infinite benevolence, should make such a world as this, full of sinners and sufferers; and that when an atonement had been made, He did not save all the race, and put an end to sin and woe forever.

"These and kindred difficulties meet the mind when we think on this great subject; and they meet us when we endeavor to urge our fellow sinners to be reconciled to God, and to put confidence in Him. On this ground they hesitate. These are *real*, not imaginary difficulties. They are probably felt by every mind that ever reflected on the subject; and they are unexplained, unmitigated, unremoved. I confess, for one, that I feel them, and feel them more sensibly and powerfully the more I look at them and the longer I live. I do not understand these facts; and I make no advance toward understanding them. I do not know that I have a ray of light on this subject which I had not when the subject first flashed across my soul. I have read, to some extent, what wise and good men have written. I have looked at their theories and explanations. I have endeavored to weigh their arguments, for my whole soul pants for light and relief on these questions. But I get neither; and in the distress and anguish of my own spirit I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world, why the earth is strewed with the dying and the dead, and why a man must suffer to all eternity.

"I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest which would be of relief to you. I trust other men—as they profess to do—understand this better than I do; and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have: but I confess when I

look on a world of sinners and of sufferers; upon death-beds and graveyards; upon the world of woe, filled with hosts to suffer for ever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow citizens; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger; and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned; and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet He does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark, to my soul, and I can not disguise it." (*Barnes' Practical Sermons*, pp. 123-125).

We could multiply examples, but this will suffice to witness to the recoil of even those who are spiritual from the so-called orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment.

The doctrine of the eternal torments of the wicked blots out a God of love from His world. One preached upon the theme: "The End of the Wicked Contemplated by the Righteous; or The Torments of the Wicked in Hell, no Occasion of Grief to the Saints in Heaven." Only a pitiless logic that practically blotted out a *God of love*, and effaced *the love of God* from the hearts of believers, could establish such a theme. In fact, we find this one of the points of that noted sermon by this great preacher. We quote from this sermon:

"The sufferings of the damned will be no occasion of grief to the heavenly inhabitants and they will have *no love nor pity* to the damned as such. It will be no argument of want of a spirit of love in them, that they do not love the damned; for the heavenly inhabitants will know that it is not fit that they should love them, because they will know then that God has no love to them, nor pity for them; but that they are the objects of God's eternal hatred . . . However the saints in heaven may have loved the damned while here, especially those



of them who were near and dear to them in this world, they will have no love to them hereafter.”<sup>1</sup>

One would not think that a godly man could be led by false premises to deny a God of love and hearts of love to prove eternal torments. It is true that he was misled by the popular erroneous translation of certain passages of Scripture and the very word “damned.” This word is properly translated “condemned.” The Scriptures say, “Love never faileth, . . . now abideth faith, hope and love.” God always and everywhere loves all of His creatures, even the most prodigal of them. His love lasts not only for this life. His love is eternal, in His very nature. The eternal punishment of the wicked would be the eternal punishment of God, and the eternal punishment of His saints.

We will mention another insurmountable difficulty against the doctrine of endless punishment, and that is this: that such teaching fosters an unloving and cruel spirit and, in part at least, accounts for much of the persecution in the past, instigated and inflicted by professing Christians. We can see what kind of spirit would be inculcated by the following quotation, and one would not think that the great Tertullian could possibly utter such sentiments on the torments of Hell. He says in addressing the pagans:

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of President Edwards*, Vol. iv, page 291 (Robert Carter & Bros., New York, 1881).

"You are fond of your spectacles; but there are other spectacles; that day disbelieved, derided by the nations, the last and eternal day of judgment, when all ages shall be swallowed up in one conflagration; what a variety of spectacles shall then appear! How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many kings, and false gods in heaven, together with Jove himself, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness!—so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in raging fire, with their scholars whom they persuaded to despise God, and to disbelieve the resurrection; and so many poets shuddering before the tribunal, not of Rhadamanthus, not of Minos, but of the disbelieved Christ! Then shall we hear the tragedians more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; then shall we see the dancers far more sprightly amidst the flames; the charioteer all red-hot in his burning car; and the wrestlers hurled, not upon the accustomed list, but upon a plain of fire."<sup>2</sup>

This fiery, unchristian eloquence was especially address to the pagans, but how far removed it was from the spirit of Christ and what cruelty and hatred would it inspire!

One of the cruel, persecuting queens of England justified her cruelty by appealing to the supposed example of God: "As the souls of heretics are hereafter to be eternally burning in hell, there can be nothing more proper than for me to imitate the divine vengeance by burning them on earth." In all the persecutions that professing Christians have promoted in the past, they fanatically believed that they were doing their cruel work for

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*, Chap. 30. Gibbon's translation. See also *Ante Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3, page 91 (Christian Lit. Co. N. Y.).

God's glory; therefore, the more zealous they were for God, the harder they labored to persecute or slay those they called heretics. Such persecutions bring the blush to the cheek of Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, for both have been guilty before God, so guilty that sometimes even children ten and twelve years of age joined with their parents in killing the children of heretics for the glory of God! It needs to be remarked here that such cruelty had not its origin in Christianity any more than the doctrine of eternal torments had its origin in Christianity. It came as an importation from paganism. The Jews received many of their conceptions outside the Bible from Egyptian and Babylonian sources, and the cruelty of Greek and Roman and other races was transported into Christianity and read into certain passages of the Bible. In the receiving of whole tribes and nations as profest followers of Christ without requiring a change of heart in them, they paganized and unchristianized the Bible doctrine of rewards and punishments. The pagans used all kinds of cruelties to subdue their ignorant people, and they imagined and invented a diabolical hell to compel obedience. That which seemed like a great day for Christ in declaring the Roman Empire Christian, when Constantine (312-337 A.D.) became a convert, was but the opening of the door for all kinds of worldliness to enter the Church. It prepared the way for the thousand

years of gross ignorance and superstition and the period usually called the "dark ages."

The historical argument against eternal torments might be further developed. It is certainly remarkable that no Church Council ever pronounced against the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all until between five and six hundred years after Christ; and that, in some of the earliest of the Church Councils, the leading spirits were honored men who were known by every one to hold the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all.

It is also worthy of note that the majority of the leaders in the first few centuries who spoke Greek as their native tongue interpreted the Bible as teaching the ultimate salvation of all. It is also true that many of the leaders who did not speak Greek in these early centuries agreed and propagated the same truth. It ought to be said further that even later than this early period the advocates of eternal torment usually held other doctrines which so modified their views of perdition that its awful punishments were greatly mitigated. These facts from Scripture, from conscience, and from history form insurmountable difficulties to the view of an eternal hell as ordinarily profest.

We would add one word more for any one who may read only this chapter: It is not to be inferred from anything here exprest that the consequences are not tremendous for one who rejects

our God and His Christ now. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The punishment and consequences of sin are terribly real and can not be escaped, but they are sane and commend themselves to every man's conscience. They are better adapted and entirely adequate to deter us from sin; and, beside all this, we can learn that God has attached a beneficent purpose to them that tends to bring one to himself that he may be ready to accept Christ and His salvation. (See Chapter on A Sane and Scriptural Doctrine of Punishment.)

## V

### ETERNITY IS NOT TIME

**THE** Bible is emphatically a Book sent by God to help man in his life in this world. It must of necessity be a Book of time and for time, otherwise it would not comfort us in our sorrows, nor teach us the way of forgiveness of sins and the way of victory over the things of time and sense. The redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, including His being made flesh; His life on earth; His death on the cross; His session at God's right hand; His coming again; His reigning till all enemies are subdued (1 Cor. 15:28); and His handing over His completed work to the Father have all to do with time.

This does not mean that eternity does not exist in God, nor that eternity is not in Christ, nor that the seed of eternity is not brought into every one who receives Him; but the seed does not enjoy its fulness of development till our Lord hands over the finished product of His life and work to the Father.

Every one has it as an inherent belief, to a greater or less degree, that time will cease and eternity will begin; but, because we are still in the limitations of time, our thinking is so bound by time and sense that eternity, in its absolute

sense, is not often considered, altho it always exists.

There can not, in the nature of the case, be any word in Scripture that means "endless time." "Time" is always connected with its cognate thought of "temporal" and "temporary." "Time" is always a relative term; "eternity," in any accurate sense, is always absolute. The difficulty is increased by popular speech. "Eternity" is used for time that does not end, but this is incorrect. If we are to have clearness of thought in this discussion and in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, it is necessary to distinguish the *absolute* from the *relative*. In many instances the translators of the Bible have failed to do this, and most Bible teachers and theologians have also failed here. Even those who know and remark the difference, when it comes to the application of the same, largely neglect it. This is caused both by the bondage of usage and the difficulty to think clearly beyond the fallen temporal condition. In fact, if we desire to speak of eternity, so temporal is our condition that we may have to use expressions of time. For instance, we might say that there never will be "a time in eternity" when the creature will not be in full fellowship with God. But the term "time in eternity" is incorrect, for there is no time in eternity, and yet if such a phrase was used, most would understand what would be meant. The failure

properly to distinguish thoughts which are opposites has done immense damage to our right understanding of God and His Word.

The Bible is preeminently a book for time. When eternity, in its absolute sense, is reached we will not need the Bible, our blessed Chart which guided our bark through the great oceans of time. Time has a beginning and an end. Eternity is without bounds. Time has fallen out of eternity after the same manner as man; and this world is in a different state from that in which it was first created. The world has lost much of its spiritual condition. It has become gross, dense, material. It was originally of spiritual substance. Time is the state that is proper for such a fallen, divided and mixed condition. Time, as we have said, has as part of its meaning, "temporary." There is no such conception in the Bible (there may be in some of our translations) as "everlasting," or "eternal," in the sense of time. The very nature of the state called "time" is *temporary*. Whatever has a beginning must also have an end.

Again we repeat, there is no word in the whole Bible that can be accurately and consistently translated "*endless time*." Time not only implies temporary, but also implies the realm of the phenomenal. This does not mean that things of time have no real existence, but only that we get to know them by their appearances, or that which sense gives us. Their real substance is shrouded



in mystery. Time, in its very nature, implies that the final state or condition has not been reached. All time will one day be converted into eternity. Time is allied to motion; eternity to rest. Time is made up of successive moments. The quality of eternity is its simultaneousness.

We may get the germ, the beginning and foretaste of eternity, in time, as we do when we trust God; but this is only the seed of eternity. No clocks will be needed in eternity. Sun dials have use only under the sun. There are no shadows in eternity. Eternity is the opposite of time. It signifies a new state of things, a different condition; it denotes timelessness, that is, the absence of time.

Time is the revolving circumference of a circle. Eternity is the fixt and unchanging center. Imagine a number of flies walking around the rim of a wheel that has been placed in a horizontal position. Each fly is present at a given point at a certain time. Each of them has its past back of it and its future before it. There are also some of the flies ahead of others and there are some following after. Each occupies a different relative position. Each is moving. We read of a certain species of fly that has two thousand five hundred eyes. We place one of these flies at the center of that wheel; without turning, it sees in all directions. Every fly on the rim of the wheel has its past, present and future. To the fly in the

center, they are all equally present. God dwells in the eternal center; and all the past, present and future of time are equally present to Him.

Many think that the past is irrevocable. It is to us, but not to our God. There is no such thing as time succession to Him. He can deal with our past or our future as easily as our present, for it is all alike present to Him. He means to teach us that since He calls Himself the "I AM," He dwells in an eternal *now*, altho this may be difficult for us to apprehend. There is enough of the ruins of our original state left in us to get some light from this astounding fact of God's eternity. This is what He means to tell us when the Word says that "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow which is caused by turning" (James 1:17, literal rendering). There is no temporal movement in God, no transitoriness, no shadows. He is a glorious, bright, unchanging Reality.<sup>1</sup>

The verse in 2 Peter 3:8 is meant to teach us the same truth: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It takes just such a temporal expression to convey the idea to us that time conditions do not prevail in God's absolute domain.

Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed His own

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1871), page 98. This distinguished author presents a true and remarkable conception of the eternity of God. We do not accept all his proof texts as relevant.

eternality when He said, literally, "Before Abraham became, I am" (John 8:58). The creature and creation of God, in the nature of the case, can have no inherent eternality, but they have had and will have a derived and imparted eternality through regeneration, recreation, glorification, and unification through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The thought of a true and absolute eternity may be perceived even by those who are not Christians nor have lived in a light that has been made living by a Christian revelation. The reason that this may be so is because the law of opposites and correlatives is inherent in all normal minds. We need no proof when we say "down" that there must be an "up"; nor when we say "near" that there must be a "far"; dark implies light, etc. Notice that the correlative of "down" is not "more down," that is, "further down"; but it is its opposite, "up." In common speech, eternity is spoken of as "endless time"; but this can not be, in the nature of things; for when we say "time" we imply its opposite "eternity," which signifies a state or condition in which time does not exist, any more than "up" exists in the word "down."

Over three hundred years before Christ, one of the best of the Grecian thinkers wrote:<sup>2</sup>

"But He (God) resolved to make a moving image of eternity and, as He set in order the heaven, He made this eternal image

<sup>2</sup> Plato's *Timaeus*, Jowett's translation, Vol. 2, page 531.

having a motion according to number, while eternity rested in unity; and this is what we call time. For there were no days and nights and months and years before the heaven was created; but when He created the heaven He created them also. All these are parts of time, and the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to the eternal essence; for we say, indeed, that He was, He is, He will be, but the truth is that 'He is' alone truly expresses Him, and that 'was' and 'will be' are only to be spoken of generation in time, for they are motions, but that which is immovably the same can not become older or younger by time, nor ever did or has become, or hereafter will be, older, nor is subject at all to any of those states of generation which attach to the movements of things of sense. These are the forms of time when imitating eternity and moving in a circle measured by number. Moreover, when we say that what has become has become, and what is becoming is becoming, and that what will become will become, and that what is not is not—all these are inaccurate modes of expression. But perhaps this is not the place in which we should discuss minutely these matters. Time then was created with the heaven, in order that being produced together they might be dissolved together, if ever there was to be any dissolution of them; and was framed after the pattern of the eternal nature, that it might, as far as possible, resemble it, for that pattern exists throughout all ages, and the created heaven has been, and is, and will be in all time. Such was the mind and thought of God in the creation of time."

Among the so-called Church Fathers and among the clearest thinkers of the Church, the true conception of eternity was recognized, tho it was not consistently applied to the interpretation of God's Word. Augustine makes the distinction in more than one place. He says in Tractate XXXVIII (John's Gospel) 10:

"Any thing whatever has not true being, if it change. If

that is not which was, a kind of death hath taken place. Something is made away with there, that was, and now is not. Something is changed and is that formerly was not. O Truth, Thou only art. For in all the movings of the creature, I find two times, past and future, I seek the present, nothing stayeth. What I have said now, is not. What I have done now, is not. What I am going to do, as yet, is not. Past and future I find in all the motion of things. In the truth which abideth I find not past and future, but only present, and this without fear or possibility of change. Take (as for example) the mutation of things: Thou wilt find *Hath been* and *Will be*. Take God and thou wilt find *I am*, where *Hath been* and *Will be* can not be. Then thou also mayest *Be*, mount beyond time. But who shall do this in his own strength? Thither let Him lift us, who said to the Father, 'I will that where *I am*, they also whom Thou hast given me *may be with me*'. Blest be God, this is His will.<sup>2</sup>

Coming nearer our own times we will quote but one or two—e.g., F. D. Maurice:<sup>3</sup>

"The word 'eternal', if what I have said be true, is a key word of the New Testament. To draw our minds from the temporal, to fix them on the eternal, is the very aim of the Divine economy. How much ought we then to dread any confusion between thoughts which our Lord has taken such pains to keep distinct? How dangerous to introduce the notion of duration into a word from which He has deliberately excluded it! And yet this is what we are precisely in the habit of doing: and it is this which causes such infinite perplexity in our minds. 'Try to conceive this', the teachers say, 'a thousand years, multiply these by a thousand, by twenty thousand, by a hundred thousand, by a million. Still you are as far from eternity as ever'. Certainly I am, quite as far. Why then did you give me the sum to work out? What could be the use of it except to bewilder me, except to make me disbelieve in eternity altogether? Do you not see that this course must be

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *The Spirits in Prison*, by E. H. Plumptre, D.D., page 361 (Thomas Whittaker, New York).

utterly wrong and mischievous? If eternity is the great reality of all, and not a portentous fiction, how dare you impress such a notion of fictitiousness on my mind as your process of illustration conveys? But is it not the only process? Quite the only one if you will bring time into the question—if you will have years and centuries to prevent you from taking in the sublime truth.”

And the great textual critic and exegete of the Word, Dr. B. F. Wescott, on page 215 of *The Epistles of John*, writes:

“In considering these phases it is necessary to premise that in spiritual things we must guard against all conclusions which rest upon the notion of succession and duration. . . . It is not an endless duration of time, but being of which time is not a measure. We have indeed no power to grasp the idea except through forms and images of sense.”

Frances Ridley Havergal’s “A Waking Thought” embodies some of the truth of the relation of time to eternity from the standpoint of redemption:

“Then Time will seem but a pebble cast  
 Into the ocean of Eternity,  
 Breaking for one short moment that pure light,  
 Which dwells upon its calm expanse of joy,  
 As into shiv’ring radiance, and shade-like circles,  
 Soon melting back into primeval brightness,  
 (Like that which was, when all created essence  
 Took but the forms of blended light and music,  
 In the glory of an infinite variety),  
 Through the translucent crystal of that sea,  
 It swiftly sinks to rest, within the depths  
 Of that great heart, like an aye-glistening  
 And treasured memory of things gone by,  
 Bearing, deep graven on its pale, clear front,  
 One word—Redemption!”

From a totally different standpoint we quote from one of our best weeklies (*The Literary Digest*) a part of its review of one of the most recent scientific theories. We are not of necessity subscribing to this theory, but the reader will note a remarkable analogy to the teaching of this chapter, drawn not from religious but from the scientific field:

"The term relativity refers to time and space; according to Galileo and Newton, time and space were absolute entities, and the moving systems of the universe were dependent on this absolute time and space. On this conception was built the science of mechanics. The resulting formulas sufficed for all motions of a slow nature; it was found, however, that they would not conform to the rapid motions apparent in electro-dynamics."

This fact led two distinguished professors (we now quote one of these professor's own words as referred to in the same review, issue of Dec. 27, 1919),

"This led the Dutch Professor Lorenz and myself (Dr. Einstein) to develop the theory of special relativity. Briefly, it discards absolute time and space and makes them in every instance relative to moving systems. By this theory, all phenomena in electro-dynamics, as well as mechanics, hitherto irreducible by the old formulas—and therefore multitudinous—were satisfactorily explained.

"Till now it was believed that time and space existed by themselves, even if there was nothing else—no sun, no earth, no stars; while now we know that time and space are not the vessels of the universe, but could not exist at all if there were no contents—namely, no sun, earth and other celestial bodies."

Whether all the theories or findings of these distinguished scientists be true or false, we have not the slightest doubt that from the standpoint of both God's Word and nature, "time" is a relative term. This fact will illumine and, to some extent, revolutionize many of the accepted interpretations of Scripture; and, no doubt, it will do the same for natural science.<sup>4</sup>

We think that we have sufficiently established the ineradicable difference between Eternity and Time. The fruit of the application of this distinction will enrich our understanding of God Himself. The doctrine of the Godhead, designated as the Trinity, will be divested of some of its difficulties and will be wondrously enriched. The character of God will be unveiled and vindicated. God's purpose and plan in creation, redemption, and new creation will be more clearly apprehended. It will be necessary to examine the Scripture more carefully as to the real meaning of its words and phrases, carefully and prayerfully, for the consequences of such discrimination are far-reaching and of vital and practical importance; and the Word of God is always our final and infallible Court of Appeal.

<sup>4</sup> See *Knowledge and Life*, by Rudolf Eucken (G. P. Putnam's Sons); also an illuminating discussion by F. Hugh Capron on Time and Eternity, in *His Anatomy of Truth* (Hodder and Stoughton).



## VI

### THE AGES PRESENTED

WE trust it has been made clear that eternity belongs to a different category from time, that it implies a different state and condition of existence and that, when we become acquainted with God and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, we have in this life only a germ or earnest of the eternity into which God will bring us at the end of time. In fact, when a believer dies, it is popularly said that he passes into eternity; but this is not an accurate statement, for, altho the condition of the departed Christian is more spiritual than in this present life, nevertheless he is still largely under time conditions (Phil. 1:6). Where there is movement and progress analogous to that on the earth, it implies change and transitoriness. Likewise even the resurrection state has its degrees, and in consequence its progression. "One star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead"; but we know it is God's purpose to bring all to the full "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), and while this is doing, it is still time.

It may aid us in clearness of thought to know that even God's manifestation in time is different from the absolute and eternal God. He has to

accommodate Himself to the creature. We know that our Lord Jesus Christ "was made flesh, and dwelt among us"; and, tho there were glimpses of His glory, they were at the best but partial. The Holy Spirit's person and work have had to be humbled that there might be adaptability to us in a temporal universe. The title of a suggestive book on the Holy Spirit is *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that the revelation of the Father suffers a similar accommodation and that He shows the same spirit of love and humility in bringing us an unveiling of Himself that we can apprehend. We can enjoy the sunlight when it is properly dealt with by our atmosphere, but who can gaze with impunity into the eye of the sun? What mortal could live in that glorious sphere? Do not wonder if some divine truths do not look right to us. We live in too dense an environment to see things as they truly are. The straight rod partly thrust into the water looks bent. Much of our apprehension of truth needs to be corrected because of the refraction caused by time conditions.

We are now ready to consider the word, in both the Old and New Testaments, which is most frequently translated "eternal," but which should be translated "age." This word in the Old Testament is used both as a noun and an adjective. In the New Testament there is the noun "age" or

<sup>1</sup> By Cardinal Manning (D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1886).

“eon” and the adjective which signifies “pertaining to an age or to the ages.” We have no adjective to express this in English except some such word as “eonian.” This word is not in common use, but it is probably the best that we have. Eons are used in geology and in some other sciences for long periods of time.

If one has seen the absolute difference between time and eternity, he will understand that by making time endless, we do not get eternity, for eternity means the absence of time, *viz.*, timelessness. Eternity in its absolute sense only obtains when time ceases. An old writer puts the matter clearly:

“Whatever suffers the condition of time, even tho it never began to be, and should never cease to be, yet it can not be called eternal. For it does not comprehend and embrace the whole at once; it has lost yesterday, and has not yet gained to-morrow.”

There is no word in the Bible, nor in the nature of the case can there be, for a “forever” or an “eternity” of time, because time ends when God becomes “all in all” and then only is there the full eternity.

It is not necessary for one to have a knowledge of the original languages, altho that is a wonderful help, nor to be a student of philosophy, to see that the words translated “ever” and “forever” and “eternal” can not possibly mean either “forever” or “eternal” or “eternity.” All one

needs is to take the English Bible and compare Scripture with Scripture with the aid of a good Concordance, such as Young's or Strong's.

I. It will be found that our translators in numerous places had to translate this word for "age" in several different ways. If it meant either "forever" or "eternal" in an absolute sense, this would not have been necessary. At the best, this word they so translate must be only a relative term.

II. It does not take any knowledge of the original languages to see that if the word "age" means "forever" or "eternal" in the singular, a plural would be an impossibility. But the word "ages" in the plural occurs quite frequently. In a number of instances it is translated "ages," as Eph. 2:7; "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Age can not mean "forever" in this passage. In Col. 1:26 "ages" is used in the plural. The translation would make nonsense if it was translated by "forever." The mystery would be "hid forever," and hence could never be made known.

III. If this word "age" signified eternity, it could have no beginning as well as no end. In the latter part of 1 Cor. 2:7 we read in our English Bible, "which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The word translated "world" is this same word "ages." Here the apostle is

speaking of something "before the ages." This certainly indicates that the word "age" does not mean eternity, and also makes plain the fact that the ages have a beginning, which eternity does not have.

In Titus 1:2 we read, "God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." This word translated "world" is the same word "age" in a plural, adjective form joined to the word "times" in the plural. The clause should be translated "God, that cannot lie, promised before age-times." This text also signifies that the ages are temporal in their meaning.

In 2 Tim. 1:9 we have a similar expression, which should also be translated "before age (or eonian) times." The ages or time clearly had a beginning and hence are not meant to signify eternity.

IV. It is clearly taught in the Scriptures that the ages have not only a beginning but also an end. We have already shown even if the ages or time continued forever that that would not be eternity. The use of the plural "ages" shows that some end before another or others begin.

1. In Matt. 13:39 it is written, "The harvest is the end of the world." Here again the word that is translated "world" is the word "age." The text should read, "The harvest is the end of the age." The same word is found in Matt. 13:40; 24:3; 28:20.

2. In 1 Cor. 10:11, in the last part of this verse, we read, "Upon whom the ends of the world are come." This should read, "Upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Therefore the ages have an end and are not eternal.

3. In Heb. 9:26 we find; "For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

In reference to the first word translated "world," it is the regular word for "world" or "universe," whereas the second word for "world" is the word "ages" and reference is again made to the fact that the ages have an end.

Further, this text speaks not of the *ends* but of the *end of the ages*. It is therefore evident that the ages have an end and do not last forever, nor are they eternal. This also negatives the idea that there is an infinite series of ages, for it speaks of the *end* of the ages, ages being in the plural; and, besides, as we have already shown, the fundamental idea of eternity is not continuous time. The very structure of our mind and thought, as well as the Word of God, demands an eternity without time succession.

### "AGE" OR "AGES TO COME"

The phrase "age" or "ages to come" needs to be definitely examined.

In Matt. 12:32 we find "Neither in this world, neither in the world to come." The word "world" is "age" in this verse. The clause should read, "Neither in this age nor in that which is to come." Here we have a reference to another age which is to come after the age when Jesus was preaching the Gospel on this earth.

In Luke 18:30 we have the words, "in the world to come life everlasting." Here the word "world" should read "age" again. The words "everlasting life" will be considered later.

In Eph. 1:21, when correctly translated, the word "age" should be substituted for "world" to translate the original word. The usual thought that comes to most minds in speaking of "the age to come," or the next age, is that of heaven; but to those to whom the Word of God was first given, the next age always meant the Millennial age, that is, the time of their being restored to their own land and of the personal presence of their Messiah and of untold temporal, physical and spiritual blessing.

We again refer to Eph. 2:7 where the Word speaks of "the ages to come." Evidently there is more than one "age to come": there must be at least two, or the plural, "ages to come," would not be appropriate.

In Isa. 65:17 we read of God creating "new heavens and a new earth"; and in Rev. 21:1, 5, we have opened to us a marvellous time when God

will be making all things new, including the heavens and earth. We see in Revelation that this period follows the Millennium. If the Millennium be an age of surpassing blessing, what must this new age be!

### “THE AGE OF THE AGES”

This line of thought throws light on the expression in Eph. 3:21, “throughout all ages, world without end.” If one looks at the Greek of this passage, the above phrase can hardly be called a translation. Some one has designated it as “a flourish.” The Revised Version in the margin is nearly accurate. The whole verse reads: “To Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen” (R. V. margin). The “age of the ages” is, therefore, the most glorious Age of all the Ages that are included in God’s marvellous plan. The phrase “the Age of the Ages” can be understood if we think of some similar expressions. If there is any day that is the best day of our life we may say it is “the day of days.” The book of Canticles is called the “Song of Songs”; that is the best or the greatest song. The “Holy of Holies” means the Holiest-of-all.

This idiomatic method of expressing the superlative leads us to examine with a new interest the phrase so frequently translated “forever and forever,” but which is literally not “forever” at all,



but "for the ages of the ages." We know by the phrase "the age of the ages" that there is one age that is the supreme age. We also know from Heb. 1:8, in the original, of the close connection of "the age of the ages" and the Millennium. It reads in the literal Greek, "But to the Son (He says) Thy throne O God, (is) for the Age of the Age." In this verse it implies that the grandest age of all springs forth from the millennial age, which is often spoken of as the age for Israel as a nation. Hence we think of these two ages and only two as the supreme ages in God's economy. As far as God's revelation of the ages is concerned these two ages are *The Ages par excellence* that lie in the future. Eternity in its absolute sense does not emerge till after these two ages are ended. This idiomatic use of two ages being called supreme, by styling them "the ages of the ages," is paralleled in more than one place in Scripture.

In Ezek. 44:13 is found in the Hebrew "unto the Holies of the Holies." If the Holy of Holies is an idiomatic way, in the Hebrew, of saying the Holiest of All, then the Holies of the Holies is an idiomatic expression referring to the two specially holy places, *viz.*, the Holy Place and the Holiest of All. Thus the two Holiest places would designate the two and only the two of the temple proper, thereby omitting the outer court, etc.

A similar construction is found in Lev. 21:22. With this key the two future ages are found to be

the most glorious ages of all. The theory of "ages tumbling on ages" or an infinite series of ages is purely imaginary. These are the two definite, final ages and always have the definite article before them. Time comes to an end when the ages end and eternity, with God "all in all," becomes an accomplished reality.

When we read in Rev. 11:15 that "He shall reign for ever and ever," we know that it literally reads "for the ages of the ages"; *viz.*, during the Millennium and also during "the Age of the Ages."

We also learn from Rev. 22:5 where the Word speaks of the reign of the saints, "they shall reign forever and ever," or, as it is in the Greek, "they shall reign for the ages of the ages," that is, during the same two great ages that our Lord, as the Redeemer, reigns.

Rev. 19:3, where the smoke of Babylon is represented as going up "forever and ever," that is, for the ages of the ages; but it certainly ceases when all things are made new. It lasts only for these two ages.

Again we need to notice Rev. 14:11. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." This verse refers to the length of time that the suffering lasts of those who worship the antichrist in the great days of tribulation before the Second Coming of Christ. This phrase here, "forever and ever," is the same one that

literally says, "for the ages of the ages"; and these ages come to an end. Even if we have not followed the entire argument, we may know not only from the Scripture referred to in Rev. 11:15, that Christ's reign, as Son of man, is to end. Compare 1 Cor. 15:24-28: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." The reign of Christ, as Son of Man and Redeemer, comes to an end when His work of redemption is completed at the end of the ages. Then all things are subject to Him and He hands over all to the Father and He Himself has no more redeeming work to do as Son of Man, but in that capacity becomes subject to the Father. This shows that the end in 1 Cor. 15:24 is the great goal and end of all time.

The punishment of the wicked is for the ages of the ages. Death itself ends before our Lord hands over His completed work (1 Cor. 15:26). Our Lord's redemptive work was potentially finished when He died on the cross, but the application of it to His creation will not be completed till the great end of the Ages. It might be well to notice that altho the Son of Man becomes subject to the Father, the Scripture does not say that the Father becomes "all in all," but "*God*

(becomes) may be all in all," that is, the whole Godhead becomes "all in all."

Before concluding this chapter it might be remarked that the two great ages to come are to be found separately treated in the next two chapters.

The question may also be asked if we can distinguish the ages since the beginning of time. We think that, as far as is necessary for our understanding of the ages and God's purpose and plan in them, this can be done.

We believe that in Gen. 1:1 at least two great ages are connoted, because the word "beginning" is in the plural in the Hebrew. The verse should be read, "By beginnings, God created the heavens and the earth"; and, lest any one should question this, in the New Testament, in Heb. 1:10, it has the word "beginning" in the Greek in the plural. Also it should read: "And, Thou, Lord, according to beginnings didst lay the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works (plural) of Thy hands." Evidently that which is called the creation from Genesis, chapter one, verse two, is, at least, the third creation. This third creation may be said to come to an end at the Flood. From the Flood to the Second Coming may be called "the world that now is," or the "present evil age." A Millennial world will follow and that will pass into the wondrous "Age of the Ages," or "The New Heaven and the New Earth," with its many

generations. The Greek literally reads, "I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Corresponding to these different worlds are the six different Ages. The first two ages referred to in Gen. 1:1 may be said to be prehistoric. How much of the conflict between science and religion would have been prevented by merely noting that the term "beginning" was in the plural! There is room for millions of years, if necessary, in this first verse of the Bible. We know that there was a cataclysm between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. These early creations ended in "waste and ruin" (Gen. 1:2, Hebrew). There may be a long period between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis one. From Gen. 1:2 to Gen. 8:14, we have the Antediluvian Age. From Gen. 8:15 to Rev. 19, we have the Age of Promise, sometimes called the "present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). Then the Millennial Age will follow, and finally the Age of the Ages. There are thus six ages. The number six seems to us appropriate as it is the number of creaturely self-will and also of the work of God in bringing the creature into His image.

It is also to be noted that when we use the word "age," we do not mean dispensation, as there may be a number of dispensations in an age.

In eternity, heaven and earth were not separated, but formed a glorious oneness and they will again reunite as one at the end of the ages. All separation comes originally from sin.

The first two ages, which are noticed in the plural of the word "beginning" in Gen. 1:1 and Heb. 1:10, may be distinguished spiritually even tho it does not appear to be God's purpose to speak particularly of them in the Bible. The fall of Satan and his angelic associates evidently was in two stages. The first was a fall into selfhood as intimated in Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-15. The result of this was the "casting down" (*katabole*, Greek) from the eternal state into a temporal one and the separation of the spiritual glory that originally existed into a heaven and an earth. God's creative work operated even in the "casting down" and this temporal world and universe was founded. This explains the reason that two different words are used in the original Greek for the word "foundation": they are *katabole* and *themelion*. The first one signifies a "casting down"; the second is the regular word for "foundation." In the "casting down" of the creation because of sin, God introduced His creative work and made it the foundation of His temporal universe. God's creative work is always animated by love and has so crystalized and bound His falling creation that it is kept from descending to such an extent that evil would have unlimited scope and development.

There are some careful students of the Word that make the word *katabole* refer to Gen. 1:2, which literally reads, "And the earth became a

waste and a ruin." There is no doubt that judgment and ruin are spoken of in Gen. 1:2, but the time referred to is the sad condition at the end of the second great age. Their explanation fails to take into full account the eternal creation (Col. 1:16) and to note that the "casting down" is used synonymous with "foundation." Heb. 1:10 uses the same root that always means "foundation." Compare with it Eph. 1:4 and John 17:24, which have the word *katabole*, or "casting down," referring apparently to the same event from the standpoint of the first fall.

In the first age there was a heaven and an earth and, altho the first sin of the angels had taken place, the sin was confined and the creation was largely spiritual.

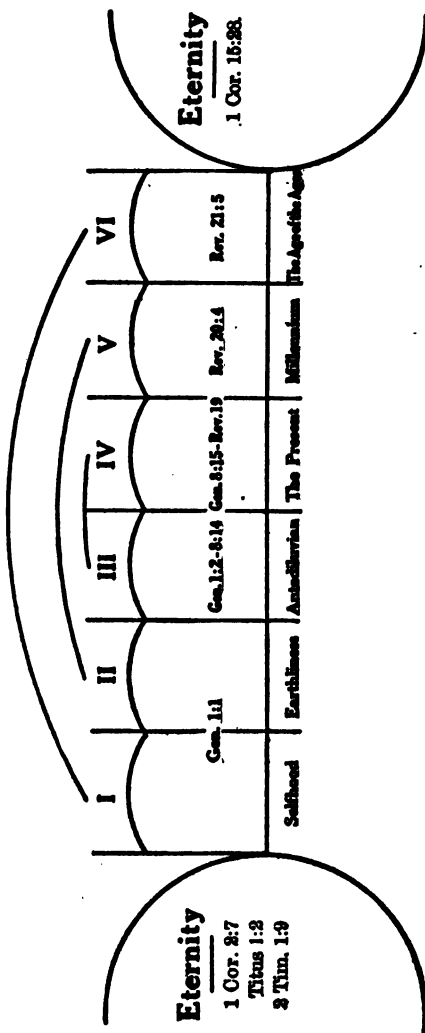
In the second age there seems to have been a further fall which caused the spiritual creation to become earthly and grossly material, something after the manner as we now know it. This is implied in Gen. 1:2, which represents that age in ruins.

The arrangement of the ages as presented in this chapter is further attested by their remarkable correspondence and contrast.

The first age and the sixth age need to be thus associated and compared. Both have a spiritual heaven and earth with evil little in evidence.

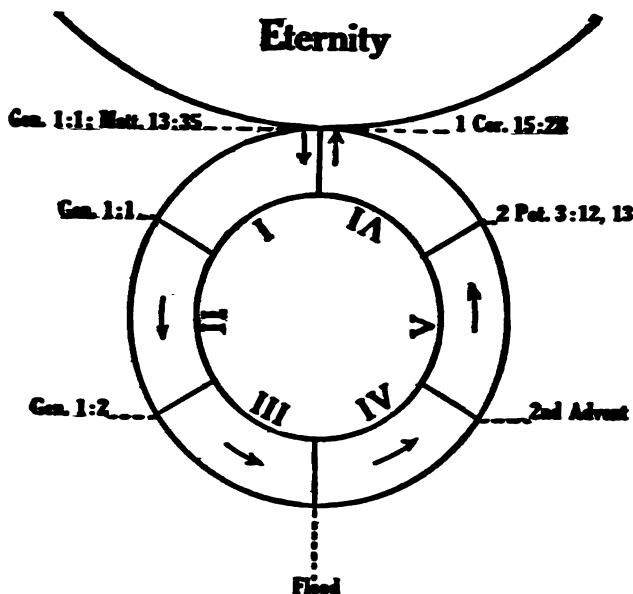
The second age and the fifth age help to explain each other. The second age shows the earth be-

THE CHART OF THE AGES



The above diagram of the six great ages with eternity at each end is perhaps more easily apprehended as thus presented. The ages and eternity would be more truly represented by bending the diagram upward from each end so that the two eternities become one and the base line forms a circle. See the diagram on the next page.





The descending arrow represents the foundation of the earth called in a number of passages in the original "the casting down." It also represents the beginning of time. The arrows indicate the course of time in the ages and the ascending arrow in the sixth age shows the end of the ages and the return of all things into God's eternity again. This illustrates the great law of circularity referred to in the chapter, God's Accommodation to a Fallen World.

coming a waste and ruin; while the fifth or Millennial age represents the earth as especially blessed and as the age ends, the earth and heavens are purged by fire.

The third age reaches from Adam to Noah; and we are told of the fourth age, "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). Also the third age begins with the first Adam and the fourth age is especially the age of the Second Adam, containing His First Coming and concluding with His Second Coming.

These six ages, thus so wondrously related, are arranged according to God's own plan and have enacted in them a redemption that provides not only for sins committed, but also for the very root, sin and selfishness (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 6:6) and, further than this, delivers us from the rudiments and beggarly elements of this world, for, through the cross, "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

This plan of God, or, as it literally reads, "according to the plan of the ages" (Eph. 3:11), will work out as God has purposed; it will not fail, God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). The saving work of Christ is to last throughout the ages, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and for the ages (Heb. 13:8, literal).

## VII

### THE MILLENNIAL AGE

**THE** Millennium is the next age after the present age. According to the Scriptures it is introduced by the Second Coming of our Lord. It is called the Millennium, which means a period of a thousand years, is spoken of as the time of Christ's reign and of that of His saints. There are, however, other great events which may follow the thousand years which may properly be included in the same age. It is therefore probable that the Millennium may be considerably longer than the thousand years.

The Millennium is a time of far more supernatural manifestation than the present time. The nation of Israel will be signally blessed and will become the most important nation in the world. The religion of the world will center in Jerusalem. There will be the mysterious and glorious city which will come down out of heaven and will be accessible from the earth. Resurrected and glorified saints and celestial angels, as well as those in the flesh, will enjoy wondrous communion; Satan, and probably his coadjutors, will be imprisoned. The earth will be greatly transformed both as to its topography and characteristics. All this and

more is foretold in the Scriptures of the prophets.

To many Bible students the Millennium is regarded as the Golden Age, in which all the hopes of mankind as exprest in the Word of God and the best of Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*, will have fulfilment. But there are other considerations that indicate that the Millennial age falls far short of perfection and, even tho Satan is bound, the natural heart of man is by no means changed:

I. There will be sin in the Millennium (Ps. 101).

II. Judgment on sin will be immediate as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5, 10; Isa. 65:20; Ps. 101). Whole nations may have to suffer judgment (Isa. 60:12; Zech. 14:17-19; Ps. 2).

There will be death in the Millennium. This will make a great impression because human life will be greatly prolonged as in the antediluvian age. One may be considered but a child at a hundred years of age and if a man die and be only one hundred years of age, death will come as a curse upon him (Isa. 65:20).

III. When Satan is loosed at the end of the thousand years, he succeeds in deceiving the nations and leading them in a great revolt. The period denoted by the words "loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:3), may extend for many years, for God's little seasons often seem very long to us; as, in Heb. 10:37, "a little while" has been nineteen hundred years. This revolt is super-

naturally and divinely subdued and Satan is cast into the lake of fire.

IV. Some time after this there looms the judgment of the "great white throne." This evidently covers a period of time, possibly a long period. The wicked dead are judged and evidently the rest of the righteous, who need divine disposing, are judged (Rev. 20:15). God could render His judgments in a moment of time; but when He deals with His creatures, His days of judgment have to be long days, that they may really understand and learn His lessons. This judgment day is to end with the earth and the heavens having a baptism of fire; they are not annihilated, but dissolved and made anew into a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:12, 13).

The whole Millennial period is characterized as "the day of the Lord" (2 Peter 3:10). This certainly implies a time of continuous judgment. The very name "Jehovah," which signifies the "I am that I am," or "I will be that I will be," shows God as acting consistently with His character and thereby requiring righteousness and demanding that justice be done. As Jehovah, He is the Lord of Sinai, the God of Law. His awfulness in righteousness and holiness terrifies. Even to the present day this name is not pronounced by the Jews. There is more than one word for "Lord" in the Scripture. This name in the Old Testament

is written in capital and "small capital" letters as "LORD," when it translates the Hebrew *yhw*. It can not always be distinguished in the New Testament.

It may aid us in understanding the Millennium and the New Heavens and the New Earth to notice a few passages in the Word. Gen. 1:2 might be translated, "And the earth became a ruin and an emptiness." God did not make it so. Isa. 45:18 tells us that God created it "not a ruin" (literal), using the very word of Gen. 1:2. When anything is a waste or a ruin there is also the natural implication that it was not always so. When we look at a ruined building we know it was not originally so. Something must have happened in God's universe that caused the waste and ruin. Evidently it was the fall of the angels or of some of His creatures. Adam's mission was intended to compass the restoration of the earth. He was told to "replenish the earth and subdue it." Adam failed through sin. The Second Adam had to complete what the first Adam failed to accomplish.

Notice the words in Gen. 9:1. A somewhat similar commission was given to Noah, "replenish the earth." He and his sons also signally failed.

God's purpose remained. He desired to bring back the heavens and the earth to what they were originally and probably even do more, but man failed again and again.

It is manifest that when God redeemed His

people out of Egypt, He intended to establish His glorious kingdom and speedily bring in the New Heavens and the New Earth. The New Jerusalem, that is the place of the throne of God, was in touch with them just before their great trespass with the golden calf. In Ex. 24:9, 10, we read, "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." God almost introduced the Millennium then. In the Millennium the New Jerusalem in its jewelled glory may be reached from Mount Sinai or from Mount Zion, which is to be greatly exalted.

Ezekiel among the captives in Babylonia saw the New Jerusalem just ready to come down if his nation would only repent and turn fully to God. God was ready even then to set up the millennial kingdom. Mark the words, "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward and from the appearance of His loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in

the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face and I heard a voice of one that spake" (Ezek. 1:26-28). Israel was not ready to return to the Lord and to execute His commission to the world. When God opened the way for their return to their own land to fulfil their destiny in His promises, only a few availed themselves of the great opportunity.

When John the Baptist proclaimed the kingdom was at hand, he was declaring the same truth of the Millennial kingdom that God had desired established at the first. Our Lord Jesus' first preaching was in the same line, but how few became His true followers. Notwithstanding the national rejection of their Messiah in crucifixion and death, God still persisted. The Shepherd still sought the sheep. The Apostle Peter after Pentecost called to his nation and said; "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His-holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21). Had Israel obeyed Peter's exhortation, Jesus would have returned and the millennial kingdom would have



been set up; but Israel would not. God's mercy lingered till the end of the Acts of the Apostles; that is why the Gospel up to that time was always "to the Jew first," but Israel has been stubborn of heart. Their national rejection was practically complete in Acts 28:25-28; this was followed by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, a few years later. The nation has been scattered and in many instances persecuted till the present day.

The national rejection of Israel was not forever. God's purposes are without repentance; the day is fast approaching for the setting up of their millennial kingdom. The Apostle Paul speaks of it in many places. Rom. 11:25, 26 is very clear, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

The Apostle John, years later, foresaw the LORD'S Day and the millennial kingdom reaching to the time of the New Heavens and the New Earth. He was transported in the Spirit into the LORD'S Day (Rev. 1:10). All the prophecies of the LORD'S Day in the past are gathered together in the book of Revelation. How like Ezekiel's vision is Rev. 1 and grander than Ex. 24

is Rev. 21:10-27! Grandeur far than the deliverance out of the land of Egypt will be God's final deliverance of Israel. "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jer. 16:14, 15). This word awaits fulfilment. The book of Revelation tells of such time.

There are those who say that the Scripture which speaks of a Millennium can not have a literal fulfilment, because in reference to that period it was said, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34). They say there was no literal fulfilment then and so there can not be now.

This verse (Matt. 24:34) is not the only verse of the New Testament that seemed to promise fulfilment in that day. We would call attention to the fact that the translation of that verse and parallel verses is not accurate in our English version. It should read; "Verily I say unto you, this generation may indeed not pass away, till all these things may be accomplished." It is a conditional sentence and there is a necessary condition which has to be first fulfilled before it will be accomplished; and that condition was not fulfilled then,

but will be fulfilled in the future. That condition is the same one that the Apostle Peter referred to in Acts 3:19-21; *viz.*, the repentance of Israel, or at least the repentance of a representative number of that nation. That promise will be fulfilled in the future and the mighty movements in and for Israel as a nation in our day presage a speedy fulfilment of all these things.

God's purpose will have no miscarriage: the millennial kingdom will be established on and over this earth. For Israel it will be a "golden age" and also for those who accept Israel's dominion and Israel's God. Of the other nations, many will give only an outward or feigned obedience. Note especially the marginal readings in Ps. 18:44; 66:3 and 81:15.

We have seen that the Millennium with all its glory is filled with judgment and with an iron rule (Ps. 2); and that notwithstanding its unspeakable blessings and Israel's preeminence, it is far from a perfect state. It can not be the final age. The final age must come with the New Heavens and the New Earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

## VIII

### THE GREAT NEGLECTED AGE

THE phrase, "the Age of the Ages," is found in Eph. 3:21. The literal reading of this verse is: "To Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus, for all the generations of the Age of the Ages." The reader may look up the marginal reading of the Revised Version and find it practically the same.

We learned in the chapter on the Ages that the phrase, "Ages of the Ages," referred to the two last great Ages; *viz.*, the Millennium and the Age of the Ages. We saw that the Age of the Ages denoted the greatest age of all, just as the expression the "Holy of the Holies" signifies the holiest of all.

We gathered from the chapter on the millennial age that that age was far from ideal, even tho it surpassed former ages in natural and spiritual grandeur. We find that many Scriptures tell of the age when all things will become new; when all things will be subdued to God; when "in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"

(Phil. 2:10, 11, literal). The title "Age of the Ages" is a fitting title for such a glorious time, for it is still time. We have already seen that all ages refer to the temporal.

In 2 Peter 3:10 we noticed in a former chapter the Day of the Lord in which the heavens shall pass away; and in verse 12 of the same chapter, we are exhorted to look for the "Day of God," when there will be a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

We are living in "Man's Day" now (1 Cor. 4:3, margin). The supremacy of man and his practical deification belong to our time. In the anti-christ this deification of man will head up (2 Thess. 2). This is the fruitage of Satan's lie in Eden, "Ye shall be as God" (Gen. 3:5, literal).

The Lord's Day will follow Man's Day and will extend from the close of this present age to the end of the Millennium. The Millennium will be followed by God's Day, or the "Day of God," according to 2 Peter 3:12. This is the final age of which we have any account in the Bible. No other age is needed to fulfill the Scriptures and the work of redemption. It is closely connected with the Millennium and springs from it. "Thy throne, O God, is for the age of the age" (Heb. 1:8), which means that the last age springs from the Millennium. In the Hebrew Scriptures Ps. 45:6, 7, from which Heb. 1:8 is quoted, literally reads, "Thy throne, O God, is for the Age and

beyond." The Millennial Age is often called "the Age"; The Age of the Ages is the "beyond" age. This final Age might be called The Neglected Age, for so many Bible students have no place for it and this is one reason why the complete redemption and reconciliation is not apprehended.

Before this final age and during this age, there is ample space for every promise and every threat to be fulfilled. There is enough time for the punishment of the wicked, also for the reconciliation and for God to make "all things new." So this age of the ages might be called the Age of the New Creation, according to Rev. 21:5, "Behold, I make all things new," or perhaps more in accord with the fact and in accord with the Greek, "Behold, I am making all things new." The new creation is not sudden in its completion, even if it is in its beginning. In 2 Cor. 5:17 we read: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." We know that the new creation of man begins as soon as his conversion takes place, but his new creation in its fulness takes a long time (the Greek word for "creation" indicates by its ending, a process). So in the new creation of the universe, its initial work will probably be sudden, but its completion will take long periods of time, for the expression is used "for (or) throughout all the generations of the Age of the Ages" (Eph. 3:21 literal; see also

margin, R. V.). It is fitting that this last age should be so extended, not only that there may be time for making all things new and getting everything right; but that our Lord may have right of way for a far longer time than Satan and man have had in spoiling the old creation. Some have supposed that such passages as the following give us more than a hint of the length of time of God's covenant with Israel and that by subtracting the years of Israel that are past from the estimated length of a thousand generations, we may find how many thousands of years there will be left for the Millennium and for the age of the ages. Deut. 7:9, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations." Also 1 Chron. 16:15: "Be ye mindful always of His covenant; the Word which He commanded to a thousand generations." Whether this calculation will be correct or not, the implication of these passages is that the promises to Israel are to extend in the future for an exceedingly long time.

We find in Eph. 1:10, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." We believe that this dispensation of the fulness of times" will form a part of this greatest age of all. The above

phrase, "He might gather together in one," literally means that "He might head up all things in Christ."

According to Col. 1:16, all things were originally created in Christ. Through sin, separation, confusion and all the consequences of sin have entered. The object of this final Age of the Ages is to get all things back under the original headship again. To this 1 Cor. 15:25 and 27 agree, "For He (Christ) must reign, till He (God) hath put all enemies . . . and all things under His (Christ's) feet." This age will include even more than "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." For the restoration of a wrecked universe is not enough. God's creatures must be so established that another fall will be a moral impossibility. Bare restoration will only take His children where they were before. It is further His purpose to bring them all to the same place as that He promised the Church in Paul's day. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13, literal). God is no respecter of persons, His promise to one is His promise to all.

Only a few, called the "first fruits," "the elect," have usually been thought of as attaining this full stature of Christ, but God says for them as



a first fruits and hence for all, "till we *all* come." (See Chapter on Headship of Christ.) It would seem unthinkable to suppose that we all were to attain the full measure of the true humanity of our Lord, but God has promised it. Note, not the measure of His Deity, but of the Christ who was made flesh. This is to be part of the astounding work that is to be completed in this final and grandest age. Our Lord's work would not be fully done if He did not hand over to the Father a finished product. This takes the conceit out of the great ones of mankind and puts a divine, unselfish inspiration and aspiration in all. Men are all different now, no two absolutely equal. The inequality has come through sin, through diligence and also through so-called natural talent. In the original creation, we were all equal. The standing of every man in the work of Christ on the cross (for He tasted death for every man and purchased a complete redemption for every man, Heb. 2:9) is absolutely equal. God will bring this result about no matter how long He has to continue the age of the ages. Here is an ultimate equality that staggers us with its ideal and accomplishment.

Some one says, What advantage is it then to those who yield to the Lord and serve Him now? The advantage for such a course will be rewarded through the myriads of years in the ages. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." But what discipline; what suffering; what anguish; what

fires; "what a forge and what a heat," must the last-born ones go through to overtake the first-born ones! Eternity can not dawn till everything that can be learned in time is thoroughly apprehended and burned in.

The Age of the Ages is the final age but not the final state. God can not bring in Eternity and become "all in all" until the Son has fully finished His redemptive work. When Christ was made flesh and went through the whole process that all have to undergo, He went through as the seed of the whole creation. The vital germ of every one and everything was in Him. "The Head of every man is Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3). Adam was only a typical head (Rom. 5:14). Christ was the Head of all ranks of angels and of men and of the whole creation (Col. 1:16). The potential universe, animate and inanimate, was in Him on the cross and is now in Him in glory. The seed will certainly bring forth everything that is within it. Through the death on the cross, the universe was potentially reconciled (Col. 1:20) and before the end of time, will be so actually.

Some one asks, Does He save without their having a change of heart? By no means; it would not be salvation without a change of heart. We do not have to know the method if He states the fact. We may, however, know much of this also. He does state the fact when He says, as the Greek and the Revised Version put it, "that in the

Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10, 11). Join to this text Isa. 45:23, "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

In looking at Phil. 2:10, "That in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow," it may be objected that they "should," but they will not. But the original here means that they not only "should," but that they also will; the same construction is in John 3:16 where the Word reads "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish," etc. There is no doubt exprest in the word "should," a believer will certainly not perish. Besides, the passage in Isa. 45:23 states by the divine oath that "every knee *shall* bow."

"In the Name of Jesus" (Greek and R. V.) means more than simply using the name of Jesus. It signifies, according to the Hebrew idiom, in the very nature of Jesus. This implies not only a change of heart, but that He has bestowed His own nature and spirit. Besides, the confession is that "Jesus Christ is Lord." No hypocritical confession will satisfy God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). Further, Phil. 2:11 says that the

confession is "to the glory of God the Father." No confession by compulsion and force would glorify "God the Father." The whole text implies a real change of heart to make this confession truly "in the Name of Jesus" and "to the glory of God the Father."

Note, further, that those who "bow" and "confess" are "in heaven," "in earth," and "under the earth." This includes the whole creation of God.

1 Cor. 15: 22-28 needs to be specially noted: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." These two clauses are not an equation but a comparison. There were far less in Adam than in Christ. The seed of the Adamites was in Adam, the seed of the universe and all in it was in Christ. Adam's death brought death to all in him, Christ's death and resurrection bring life to all in Him. The result is not instantaneous. "But every man in his own order." Some are first-born ones, that is, a kind of first fruits (Jas. 1: 18); but "first-fruits" implies that the fulness of the harvest has not yet come. The Millennium and the Age of the Ages is the full harvest time; it comes in "the fulness of times" (Eph. 1: 10).

"Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. 15: 24). The word "end" here means the "goal," the "final consummation." It signifies that the purpose of God is accomplished. In Jas. 5: 11, in speaking of the Lord's accomplishing His purpose with Job,

the Word says, "Ye . . . have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12).

Our Lord delivers up the kingdom to the Father when He finishes His work. All enemies are subjected. Death is conquered. There is no death in God's universe—no first death, nor second death, nor any kind of death. There is no place for hell when everything is made new. The Father is the only One who is not made subject to the Son. In verses 27 and 28 of 1 Cor. 15, the same word is used, in different forms, six times. It might be translated "subjected." It is rendered in verse 27 three times by the words "put under"; in verse 28, it is translated "subdued," "be subject" and "put under." It is the same word that is used of our Lord as a boy, when the Scripture says that Jesus was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51). It expresses loving and loyal obedience. Here no other meaning is possible, for it is the fruitage of Christ's death and resurrection; and the same word is used of Christ, the Son, becoming subject to the Father. If the other subjection was not loving and voluntary, some modifying word would be necessary in this connection. Notice, the Scripture does not say that the Father "may be all in all," but that "God may be all in all." Christ as Redeemer and Son of man becomes subject; but as Son of God He is part of the Godhead that becomes all and in all.

One of the able writers on the Ages says :

"This principle of rule by delegated authority, which dates before the fall of the angels (Jude 6, for 'estate' read 'principality'), was conferred on Adam, till he too fell (Ps. 8: 6-8), then on Israel (1 Kings 4: 21) till she apostatized, then on the Gentiles (Dan. 2: 36-43), whose 'times' continue until now and are to close in the blasphemous ambition of one who shall set up his throne in the temple of God and claim Divine worship (2 Thess. 2). This principle is seen in full force in the Millennium. For (1) Christ Himself shall reign (by His deputy, the prince), as God's king in Zion (Ps. 2), the saints of the first resurrection (Rev. 20: 4) being His associates on the throne; (2) then the twelve disciples (the apostle of the Gentiles is not of them) shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19: 28); and (3) of the sons of Israel Christ will make 'princes in all the earth' (Ps. 45: 16), that is sovereign delegates in each Gentile nation of the world. In other words, a complete system of deputed rule, authority, and power will be set up on the earth, the whole of it being in the hands of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

But in the final Age deputed rule will gradually cease, till Christ will reign alone with the whole universe joined to Him as a living body to its head. It is this sort of a redeemed and glorified "cosmos" that is handed over to the Father.

We will mention a few texts of Scripture that may need a word of comment:

"And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for the ages and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1: 33, literal).

This text harmonizes with all others and tells

<sup>1</sup> *After the Thousand Years*, by George T. Trench, B.A. (London: Morgan & Scott), page 70.

us that Christ shall reign for the ages of the ages. We know that His reign comes to an end when He delivers the kingdom to the Father.

The second clause means that there shall be "no end" of His kingdom while the ages (which are time) last. This makes no reference to eternity. In Isa. 9:7 the same is said, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." We know that Christ's personal reign lasts as long as time and He delivers up the kingdom to the Father at the end of time (1 Cor. 15:24). Any difficulty with these passages arises only from trying to take "end" in an absolute sense when it is relative, for the Bible is a book for time and time relationships. When the Word says, "neither is there any end of their treasures; . . . neither is there any end of their chariots"; we all understand that the usage of the word "end" is relative.

There are those believing in ultimate salvation who say that the kingdom does not end even if Christ's rule ends. Let those who desire, accept that interpretation. We think that there is no reference in this text to eternity in its absolute sense but it is relative and refers to time.

It might be wise to consider another text which is thought, by some, difficult to explain. "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor.-4:18). The verse is not correctly translated, it should

read "the things which are seen are for a while (Matt. 13: 21 has the same word), the things which are not seen are for the ages." The transient things around us pass away, the invisible things last for the ages. We know that many of the invisible things pass away, such as hate, sin and sorrow, even the good invisible things pass from their temporal manifestation into an eternal state at the end of the ages. The Apostle is speaking in the preceding verse of "the light affliction which is but for a moment works for us an exceeding weight of glory for the ages" (literal). These little afflictions which are for the brief span of our life, work an age-abiding glory. He is not speaking of eternity where all God's creatures have reached equality of glory in Christ, the inequality is only for the ages. The standing of every one in our Lord's redemption is equal and eternity will not arrive till God has brought all into this fulness and equality as wrought for them by Christ.

We have often thought of how great the change must be for a Christian "to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better:" we have often marveled at the thrill of life and joy that the redeemed will enjoy at the resurrection. We believe that the greatest experience that will ever come to any living being will be to have all things of time and sense disappear and God and His creatures and creation in ineffable and eternal union.



## IX

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HADES

**THE** word "Hades" means "unseen" and it is the term used in the New Testament for the invisible world of departed spirits. It is a gross error to use the word always in a bad sense and translate it by the word "hell," for Hades has a good part as well as a bad part. The good portion is regarded as above the bad portion. The good part is called Paradise (Luke 23:43); and we may infer that the bad portion is called "Tartarus" (2 Peter 2:4): "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus," etc. (literal). Jesus said to the dying malefactor, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The expression "Abraham's Bosom" is a Jewish term synonymous with at least a part of Paradise (Luke 16:22). The usage of the word "Sheol" is that it is the Old Testament synonym for Hades.

The word "Hades" occurs in the following passages of the Scripture:

Matt. 11:23, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell (Hades): for if the mighty works, which have been

done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

Matt. 16:18, "The gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail."

Luke 10:15, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell (Hades)."

Luke 16:23, "In hell (Hades) he lifted up his eyes."

Acts 2:27, "Wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades)."

Acts 2:31, "His soul was not left in hell (Hades)."

1 Cor. 15:55, "O grave (Hades), where is thy victory?"

Rev. 1:18, "Have the keys of hell (Hades) and of death."

Rev. 6:8, "And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell (Hades) followed with him."

Rev. 20:13 "Death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them."

Rev. 20:14, "And death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire."

The Hadean state is the state into which the departed pass immediately upon death and there remain till the resurrection. It is, therefore, frequently spoken of as the Intermediate State.

There are those who hold that it was true that the saved entered Paradise in the Old Testament times and in the early Gospel times; but since

Jesus ascended on high, they assert that the righteous immediately enter the highest heaven. We do not think that this position can be established by Scripture. The principal text that is quoted to prove this view is Eph. 4:8, "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The leading "captivity captive" is made to refer to our Lord leading the righteous out of Paradise into heaven itself; whereas, the phrase "He led captivity captive" refers to the conquering of enemies and leading them in triumph. We have almost the same phrase in Judges 5:12. There it is seen as a Hebrew idiomatic expression referring to the conquering of enemies and leading them captive. So in our Lord's death on the cross and His ascending on high, He spoiled principality and power and made a show of them openly through the power of His death and resurrected life. Satan could not keep Him down and He ascended high above all enemies. Satan and all his hosts are already, potentially, conquered foes. Their captivity was sealed by His resurrection and ascension. Col. 2:15 says that on the cross Jesus spoiled principalities and powers. He conquered death and the grave and Satan and his hosts. He ascended as victor, having broken the power and authority of the enemy, Satan; therefore, He could give power to His own (Eph. 4:11). The Christian blessing that Christ gives us has been

snatched from the enemy. He gives us peace and joy and every good thing which the enemy has stolen from mankind. Christ divides the spoil (Luke 11:22) and the Word tells us that all the powers of darkness are in captivity to His power (Eph. 4:8). He will manifest this dominion at the proper time. To those who trust Him Satan is already a conquered foe. This view also makes Paradise a prison holding the redeemed as captives, whereas, it is a heaven for this stage of things, even tho God has something higher for them at the Second Coming of the Lord. The blessed condition of Lazarus in Paradise is certainly set forth in Scripture (Luke 16:25).

In addition to this we have one or two very clear texts. Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost which was after the ascension of Christ, says, in Acts 2:34: "For David is not ascended into the heavens." It certainly would seem strange that David should be left in Paradise if Jesus took all the saints up with Him. Again, John 3:13 reads; "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." We believe that the failure to realize the full force of this text arises from the fact that it is not usually observed that this verse thirteen was spoken by John, the writer of the Fourth Gospel and not by our Lord. For at the time Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, Christ had neither died nor ascended; and, besides, the

verse asserts that the Son of man was then in heaven. This was not true till after He ascended: as God He might be everywhere, but as Son of Man He was not in heaven till He ascended there. John is writing these words long after the ascension of Christ, and he says that Christ is the only one who "hath ascended up to heaven." This becomes plainer when we remember that Jesus Himself did not ascend into the heavens immediately upon His death but only after the resurrection. Neither shall we: and for the believer the resurrection is always in connection with the Second Coming of the Lord; and for the unbeliever at least a thousand years thereafter.

The Church needs to emphasize the fact that the full measure of rewards is not given till we get our glorified bodies; and also that the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, except in reference to the anti-Christ and false prophet, is not brought to our notice till the closing portion of the Millennium and that most are not cast into it for at least a thousand years after Christ's Second Coming.

Many theologians seem to teach that we immediately receive all God has for us when we die. The full harvest of both joy and suffering comes only after the Second Coming of the Lord. This does not derogate from the fact that Paradise is a blessed state, or that Tartarus is a place of suffering. We believe more than this; *viz.*, that rewards and punishments begin in this life, that

heaven and hell begin here. He alone can go to Paradise or heaven who has heaven begun in him and he alone can go to hell, Tartarus, or the Lake of Fire, who has hell begun here. The Intermediate, or Hadean state, will have more of both joy and suffering than we have in this life, but the fuller state, heavenly or hellish, will not come until after the resurrection.

Our Lord manifests Himself in these three conditions. We know that He manifests Himself to His children here in this life. We know that He manifests Himself in the next state, for "to depart, and be with Christ is far better." He will manifest Himself in the resurrected state, for "When Christ . . . shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

It is a source of great comfort to know that we never lose our identity in the Intermediate, or in any state.

Our Lord went and preached to the spirits in prison that were aforetime disobedient in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:18-20). He went after He was killed and was quickened in spirit. He greeted the repentant thief in Paradise, but it was especially in the Tartarus portion that He is said to have preached, to the very same antediluvians who would not heed Noah's preaching.

Dives and Lazarus are represented as having preserved their identity and as knowing each other.

Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration were manifested from the Hadean state—their identity was preserved.

David, in speaking of the death of his little son, says, "Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him." There would have been no comfort in this if he and the child were not the same in identity and also that recognition and association were facts.

The phrase, "Gathered to his fathers," so frequently used of death, means more than having their bodies in the grave, even tho some saw only as far as that. In speaking of the Lord as the "God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," the Scripture adds, "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him" (Luke 20:37, 38).

It helps us to understand the fact of identity and real recognition after death to recall that identity in the particles of our body is not necessary for the preservation of identity. The atoms of our bodies are changing every moment and entirely change every few years, and yet we know each other and count each other's personality as permanent.

Progression and advance do not alter identity. Besides, altho this natural body is laid aside, there is a spiritual body that awaits us at the resurrection; and even in this life we get an earnest of that spiritual body forming within us

(2 Cor. 5:5). "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). If this is true here, how much more in the Intermediate state!

Even the unsaved pass into the next life with the forces of their spirit which formed and made their body in this life. This spiritual body goes with them into the Hadean state, no matter how warped and dwarfed it may become. Each one that passes out of this life reaches the next life in exactly the same spiritual condition in which he was when he died. Death did nothing for him except to separate him from his earthly body. The intermediate state is for discipline, punishment, a process of judging, and for improvement, progress, and growth. There are those who without others will "not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40); and there are others whose "spirits are made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).

Our Lord, after His death, was quickened in spirit and went and preached to those who were disobedient in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:18-20); this is proof of conscious activity in the Hadean state.

If there ever was a wicked company it was that of Noah's day. The word "to preach" is to herald, but it is the same word as that which refers to John the Baptist's preaching, and to Paul when he preached "Christ and Him crucified." In the next chapter (1 Peter 4:6), we read that "for this



cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." This word for "preach" is the word "to declare glad tidings," and the result was to bring judgment upon them and also for conversion; viz., to "live according to God in the spirit." Our Lord did this kind of preaching once and He is "no respecter of persons." If He preached to this company that was as degraded as any company in the world, He will do so again, and He will not neglect less guilty companies.

Let it be remembered that the First Epistle of Peter was written to a persecuted company of believers. It was written during the reign of cruel Nero. Christians were being imprisoned and martyred, the attempt was made to stamp out Christianity. The people were tempted to discouragement and it took grit and grace to witness for Christ. The Apostle encourages them in their "fiery trial." He tells them "if ye suffer for righteousness' sake (our Lord suffered in that manner) happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror." Then he tells them to "sanctify the Lord in your hearts as God" (literal); and go on with your preaching and witnessing, for if they kill you (so the argument runs), they will not stop you: they killed Christ but death only opened for Him a larger field; so, believers, fear not, if they kill you, you will only have a wider field of use-

fulness opened, your opportunities for saving souls will increase.

How many teach that death ends God's power over lost souls! As if Satan, who has them, were stronger than God, and that God was no longer loving, whereas it is Christ who holds the keys (Rev. 1:18)!

Martin Luther wrote:

"God forbid that I should limit the time of acquiring faith to the present life. In the depth of the Divine mercy there may be opportunity to win it in the future."<sup>1</sup>

Bengel also quotes<sup>2</sup> Luther's exposition of Hosea as accepting the idea that Christ appeared to the souls of some who in the time of Noah had been unbelieving, that they might recognize that their sins were forgiven through His sacrifice.

To us the Scripture is plain enough, unless there is prejudice to warp the judgment. John 5:25 is large enough for this thought and more: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

How many a mother weeping for her children refuses to be comforted because they are not! The mother's prayer and work seems to have been for nought. They are dead in the land of

<sup>1</sup> Luther's letter to Hansen von Rechenberg in 1522. Quoted, page 168, in *The After Life* by Henry Buckle (George W. Jacobs & Co. Phila., Pa.).

<sup>2</sup> Bengel's *Gnomon*, translated by Charlton T. Lewis, M.A., page 748, under 1 Peter 3:20 (Perkinpine & Higgins, Phila., Pa.).

the enemy. Hear the Word of God: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy" (Jer. 31:15, 16). These words were in part fulfilled in our Lord's childhood at the slaughter of the innocents; but their complete fulfilment will not take place till the proud, self-willed, unbroken and dead children of Ephraim, and all other such children, repent and God's Word is fulfilled, "I will surely have mercy upon" them, "they shall come again from the land of the enemy" (Jer. 31:16-20).

The suffering of the rich man in Tartarus had certainly done wonders for him. He probably had never been concerned about his "brothers" before. Now he is more than solicitous. It was more than earthly water that he thirsted for. He had no physical tongue. His thirst was spiritual, and only the spiritual water of life could satisfy him. He is not saved yet, but he is moving already in that direction.

But, says some one, "There was a great gulf fixed between the righteous and the wicked." The next clause, as it reads in the Greek, does not say that they "can not" pass over but that they "may

not" be able to pass over, for Christ had not yet died and made the way. That gulf is fixt, even in this life, between the righteous and the wicked. "He that believeth not is condemned already," "the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth is not condemned" (John 3:18, 36). Man has no power to cross the gulf but Christ has. By His death He bridged it, He is the Bridge. He has the "keys of Hades and of death" (Rev. 1:18). He bridged it when He died and went and preached to the spirits in prison and He will do it again. He so unites Himself to His Church of every dispensation that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." There is no power in Hades that can block the work of Christ and of the Church in Hades to keep a repentant soul from Christ. Some one may say, "They can not repent." That may be true in part, but only in part for the only true repentance that counts anywhere is His gift (Acts 5:31). His command is always an enabling.

A helpful writer thus expresses himself:<sup>8</sup>

"There is one thing which astonishes me beyond measure, and that is, that any attempt to show from Scripture that the salvation of Christ is more embrasive than has been commonly imagined, calls forth a display of bitterest hostility, and the most cruel misrepresentation. It is one of the puzzles of human nature. Unless experience has taught us otherwise, we should be inclined to think that a Christianity whose chief

<sup>8</sup> *Our Life after Death*, by Rev. Arthur Chambers (Geo. W. Jacobs & Co., Phila., Pa.), page 135.

characteristic is described by St. Paul as being 'charity' which 'hopeth all things,' would hail with intense delight the thought of salvation beyond the grave for poor unfortunates who have lived and died without, in some cases, one of the religious advantages which we enjoy. That the attitude of a man or woman, bearing the name of a pitiful Christ, toward any suggestion of such a hope would be, "Thank God! Tell me, are there any statements in the Bible upon which I can rest such a magnificent belief? How devoutly I wish you may be right in what you say: How far more glorious and attractive will it make the Gospel for me?"

Of those who are righteous the Hadean state will be for them a time of further training, discipline and development. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). In place of the work of grace being finished God will carry it on till the Day of Christ and that day reaches not only to His coming but to the end of the ages. May we not pray as well as preach in the Intermediate state? Yes, and beyond, for our Lord still does both, and He is in the resurrected state. Our work will extend through all time. He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; . . . That in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:3, 10). God has called us to a magnificent service which will bring to us an ample discipline and a fuller glory.

When man fell it was a twofold fall. He fell

into spiritual selfhood and he fell into an earthly nature. To get man back he has to die two deaths: he has to die to the natural and earthly and he has to die to self. If in this life man does not have these deaths wrought in him, then he enters the Hadean life with its judgments, discipline, training, and service. If man is still stubborn, there awaits him, and all such, the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, which is "the second death." The first death slew the natural and animal and took him into the Hadean state, and at its end, it and death, that is, all in Hades that have not repented are cast into the Lake of Fire where the process of the second death awaits, which is the death of all selfishness.

## X

### A STUDY OF GEHENNA AND THE WORDS DESTROY AND DESTRUCTION

THE word "Gehenna" is used in twelve passages of Holy Scripture. We can best study them by viewing all of them. In each instance the word "hell" is the translation; only a student of the Bible in the original Greek could tell that the word here is "Gehenna." The word occurs nowhere else in the Bible.

**Matt. 5:22.** "shall be in danger of hell fire."

5:29, "whole body shall be cast into  
hell."

5:30, "whole body should be cast into  
hell."

10:28, "to destroy both soul and body in  
hell."

18: 9, "rather than having two eyes to  
be cast into hell fire."

23:15, "more the child of hell than your-  
selves."

23:33, "can ye escape the damnation of  
hell?"

**Mark 9:43,** "having two hands to go into  
hell."

9:45, "having two feet to be cast into hell."

9:47, "having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

Luke 12: 5, "hath power to cast into hell."

Jas. 3: 6, "and it is set on fire of hell."

The only way that any passage of Scripture can be properly expounded is to discover the time and place to which it refers. A passage of Scripture that belongs to one dispensation ought to be explained in reference to that particular dispensation. It is through failure to follow this principle that confusion is brought to many passages of Scripture.

The first three Gospels, and the Gospel according to Matthew in particular, are anticipatory to our Lord's setting up a theocratic kingdom on the earth. In this way alone can the Sermon on the Mount be fully understood. This is not affirming that in these first Gospels there is no revelation that is appropriate for other dispensations, but it is saying that its truth especially belongs to that period. If Israel had repented (Acts 3: 19, etc.), the Millennium would have begun and all the conditions and laws that have special reference to that time would have gone into effect. We have seen in the chapter on "The Millennium" that certain sins will be immediately punished, even lying and slandering will be punished with death. The early portion of the Acts of the Apostles has



some of the same characteristics: note the case of Ananias and Sapphira (see also Ps. 101: 4, 7, 8). This certainly will be a new order of things.

Outside of Jerusalem, in the valley of Hinnom, there will be a place for the disposing and cremating of the bodies of certain wicked ones, and that is the meaning of "Gehenna." In fact, it seems that very many will be thus punished, having been smitten by some destroying angel, and their bodies will be burned. The last verses in the last chapter of Isaiah refer to this same thing:

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66: 23). This refers to the Millennial time. Zech. 14: 16-18 refers to the same period. All nations will have Jerusalem as their center of worship and will send their representatives there every year (Isa. 66: 23).

The next verse adds: "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Notice that this whole scene is spoken of men in their bodies of flesh, who are alive on the earth. The criminals judicially die and their bodies are burned. The inhabitants of and visitors to Jerusalem may walk outside the city and see the great crematory. There evidently will be so many

bodies that some will begin to decay and will breed worms before they can be burned. In other passages of Scripture when it says that the fire shall not be quenched, we will explain in another chapter that it indicates that the worm will not die and the fire will not be quenched till the work is done (see Jer. 17:4 and 17:27). The fire spoken of in these passages was to burn up Jerusalem completely at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, which it did: it was not quenched till it fully accomplished the judgment that was prophesied.

All these references to Gehenna do not mean "hell" at all, for they refer to natural fire and to natural bodies burned in the Valley of Hinnom outside of Jerusalem. There is a hell, but these passages are not referring to it. They should always be translated "Gehenna." The fire of Gehenna was natural fire; and the bodies were bodies of flesh; and the inhabitants that will see them will be alive on the earth. This passage has no reference to the Lake of Fire. We will study about the Lake of Fire later. It will take another kind of fire than natural fire to torment Satan and his associates. It will be a real fire but not an earthly one. Notice that the text in Mark 9:43, 48 has the same words as Isa. 66:24, and refers to the same time and place.

Examine for a moment Matt. 5:22, "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother" ("without a cause" is not in the best

manuscripts. See the Revised Version.) "shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca! (thou foolish fellow) shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool! (or reprobate) shall be in danger of the fire of Gehenna." Any one who reads this verse can see that it does not refer to the present but to the judgments that are to be poured out just before and in the Millennium, when there will be the judgments of the destroying angels and the bodies will be burned in the fire in the valley of Hinnom. Every one of the passages quoted at the beginning of this chapter has an easy and simple explanation when it is applied to the proper dispensation."

The passage in James 3:6 containing the word Gehenna is thought by some to be used largely in a figurative sense; but, because the book of James refers to the same Millennial period as is referred to in the Gospels, it has a literal reference also. Many sins of the tongue are at that time to be punished by death and by the burning of the body in Gehenna (Ps. 101).

The passage in Matt. 10:28 has often been thought of as presenting the greatest difficulty because of their being told to "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Gehenna). From Isa. 10:18, we learn that the phrase "soul and

body" (or flesh), is a figurative expression and signifies "completely," the same as if it had read, "root and branch." So Isa. 10:18, in plain English would read: "And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, completely, or utterly." For in this passage Isaiah is speaking of a forest and not of persons. So in Matt. 10:28, interpreting the words according to the time that immediately precedes the Millennium, *i.e.*, the Great Tribulation, our Lord tells them not to fear the antichrist or the false prophet, who will slay all those who refuse to worship the antichrist, but rather fear to do wrong and to commit sin for a sorer punishment will follow, *viz.*, the destroying angel will destroy the sinner in Gehenna. The wicked will be killed and their bodies burned in the valley of Hinnom, and their souls lost, for the Millennium.

The judgments that are to be poured out are to be similar to those poured out in the days of Moses on the Egyptians when, among other things, the first-born of man and beast was slain. So there will be terrible judgments executed upon the nations gathered against Jerusalem in that time. God or Moses did not directly inflict the Egyptian punishments, they were brought about entirely by their own sin. By their sin the Egyptians separated themselves from God and He could not help them as He could the Israelites. See Ps. 78:43, 49: "How He had wrought His

signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan. . . . He cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them." It was evil angels who wrought the judgments. Such judgments can be attributed to God only in a governmental or permissive sense. (See Chapter on What Saith the Scripture.)

Notice Ex. 12:23: "For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Here the Lord is clearly seen as not being the destroyer, for He is represented as entering through the blood-sprinkled doorways of the Israelites and preventing the destroying angel from doing his work. Compare Matt. 13:49, 50, and see the work of the destroying angels: "So shall it be at the end of the age (literal): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Judicially and permissively the punishment of the Egyptians is attributed to the Lord; but really it is the consequence of their own rebellion; for had they done God's will, He could have protected them as well. Sin causes men to step beyond the place where God can for their good protect them. He can

reach them only through judgments and punishment, which He makes work ultimate good.

This may be a fitting place to study the word "destroy," which is used in connection with Gehenna in this same passage, Matt. 10:28. The root of the principal word "to destroy," in the New Testament, is *ollumi* joined to a preposition which strengthens its meaning. It means "destroy" and "perish," but not in the sense of "annihilation"; for it is the same word that is translated "lost" in Matt. 10:6, where the disciples were told to "go rather to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel." It is the same word translated "lose" in Matt. 16:25, "whosoever will lose his life shall find it." It is translated "marred" in Mark 2:22, "The bottles will be marred." It is the same word translated "perish" in the great text, John 3:16; and in Luke 19:10 it is again translated "lost," "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The same root is in the word "destruction" as in 2 Thess. 1:9, where also the word "everlasting" should be rendered "age-abiding."

These examples show us that the fundamental idea to be expressed in the words "destroy" and "destruction," is to reduce to ruins. A lost soul is one whose spiritual life is in ruins. It is that class of lost ones that our Lord came to save (Luke 19:10). This further explains Matt. 10:28 in which the believers are warned not to yield to

the antichrist even if they were killed for their faith; otherwise they would suffer from the destroying angel and be completely reduced to ruins, physically, morally, and spiritually. If they lost their lives through fidelity to the Lord, that would be praiseworthy, but if they yielded to the temptation to sin in the Tribulation or the Millennium, then the judgment of God would be upon them, and for their sin they would be brought to ruins in Gehenna.

Gehenna is therefore seen to be principally the place of the burning of the corpses of certain transgressors. It seems also that some may be cast alive into Gehenna and burned as a special penalty; to such it would be a gateway to the Hadean state.

## XI

### THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

**THERE** are only three chapters in the Bible that distinctly mention "the Lake of Fire and Brimstone." They are Rev. 19, 20, and 21. In order to have them clearly before us we will quote each passage:

Rev. 19: 20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Rev. 20: 10, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages" (literal).

Rev. 20: 13-15, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was



not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Rev. 21:8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word "brimstone" or sulfur defines the character of the fire.

The word *theion* translated "brimstone" is exactly the same word *theion* which means "divine." Sulfur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and to consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's *Iliad* (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo*, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god. (See Liddell and Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1897 Edition.)

To any Greek, or to any trained in the Greek language, a "lake of fire and brimstone" would mean a "lake of divine purification." The idea of judgment need not be excluded (see chapter on The Judgments of God). Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in an-

cient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it.

“The Lake of Fire” does not appear in Scripture until the introduction to the Millennium, altho many theologians send the wicked there now. Satan is not there yet. There is not a single Scripture that teaches that Satan is confined either in Hades or in the Lake of Fire now. He is not utterly cast out of the heavenlies yet, and many of his angels and demons still have access there (Eph. 6:12). He and they are to be cast down at the time of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 12:9, 10). The demons that possess the Gardarene’s swine prayed that they might not be cast into the abyss (Luke 8:31, literal). They evidently were not yet confined there.

Toward the end of the age called the Millennium, Satan and his helpers are to be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone and tormented there “day and night” for the rest of the millennial Age. (This Age, as we have shown, probably lasts far longer than the thousand years. The saints reign one thousand years.) Satan also will be tormented in the next age which is the great final age. We have seen in the Chapter on The Ages, that these two ages comprise “the ages of the ages.”

The word “torment” needs study. In the New

Testament the same word is used of one "sick of the palsy, grievously *tormented*" (Matt. 8:6). It is used of the disciples' ship in Galilee, and is translated "*tossed* with waves" (Matt. 14:24). It is translated by the word "toiling" in Mark 6:48. It is translated by the word "vexed" in speaking of Lot (2 Pet. 2:8). It is translated by a word that means "birth-pains" (Rev. 12:2). In the other Scriptures it is translated by the word "torment" or "tormented." The original idea of the verb is "to put to the test by rubbing on a touchstone." Then it means "to question by applying some test or torture to discover whether true or not." The original idea was to test some metal that looked like gold to find whether it was real or not. It also signifies "to torture in order to extort a confession." The meaning and usage of this word harmonizes with the idea of divine purification and the torment which is the test to find whether there has been any change or not in the sufferer. Through the hidden, loving purpose of God, every pang of torment will be a birth pang; and the grace of God will not be absent—and as He says, "Behold, I am making all things new" (literal). He will leave no spot in the whole universe unrenewed. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue . . . confess" (Phil. 2:10, 11, literal). The ages of the ages come to an end. "Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Time ceases and eternity be-

gins. There will be no "day and night" in eternity. The suffering lasts only while there is "day and night" (Rev. 20:10).

There is another phrase that may throw further light upon this great theme and that is "the second death," "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The Second Death implies that there must be a first death. The first death is what is usually called a physical death. The second death that a Christian has to endure is the death of the self-life (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6). To be a real overcomer we must trust the Lord that our self-life was "crucified with Christ." Only those who have had this second death wrought in them will "not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11). Practically all those who are condemned to the Lake of Fire have endured the first death; but the self-life has been untouched or so hardened as to have kept them, up to that time, from yielding to the grace of Christ.

In the cross of Christ there was provision for the first death (Col. 2:20), "Dead with Christ from the rudiments (or elements) of the world." Also Gal. 6:14, "The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Besides this elemental death, there is a spiritual death of self that has to be wrought. This is all provided for in the cross of Christ. Man fell at least into two conditions

or stages, and in his redemption he has to retrace these two stages, to return to the plane upon which he was originally created. The cross of Christ will deliver from both the first and the second death.

Sin develops till it slays the Son of man. In slaying Him, it reaches its fulness of iniquity, the crime of the universe. Sin always aims to kill the Christ, the Life and Light, and in the death of Christ it attained its object; but by so doing, it potentially slew itself, for by death Christ conquered him who had the power of death, even the devil (Heb. 2:14). So then the death of Christ slew death. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). Then there will be a universe without death; then there will be no first death nor second death; then all things will have been made new; then the Son will hand over a finished work to the Father.

This world is especially concerned with the forces of good and the forces of evil, and is the seed plot of the universe. It was the place where our Lord was born and died, where He is to come again and reap the fruits of His victory on the Cross. This world has been the theater for the heading up of evil and its final overthrow, so, not only is this world the seed plot, but also the greatest battlefield in the universe.

We do not know the location of the Lake of Fire but it might be on this earth; if it is to be here, Babylon and its region would be the most likely quarter. The smoke of Babylon ascends for the ages of the ages and also the smoke of the Lake of Fire. Rev. 19:3, "And her (Babylon) smoke rose up for the ages of the ages" (literal). Rev. 14:11, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth for the ages of the ages" (literal).

Isa. 34:9, 10 indicates that the land of the Lord's enemies will become lands burning with fire and brimstone. The whole description harmonizes with the judgments on Babylon; for this same Babylon has been the center of defection from God from the earliest times. In Rev. 9:14, the voice from the golden altar bids the angel "Loose the four angels which are bound in (or at) the great river Euphrates." Rev. 16:12-14 tells of a vial of wrath poured upon the great river Euphrates, and evil spirits were released. This place of the special detention of evil angels and evil spirits might be a location of sufficient spiritual manifestation to punish and purify spiritual beings. "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2). It will also have enough of natural location and characteristics for the beast and the false prophet to

be cast into it "*alive*" (Rev. 19:20). Wherever it is, even *this place* will yield to the renewing work of Him who makes "all things new" (Rev. 21:5; Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:19-21). The divine purification will be complete. Those confined in the Lake of Fire are not saved by their suffering, but plowed and harrowed by it, or punished and judged till willing for all of Christ and none of self.

Christ becomes "all and in all," that God "may be all in all."

## XII

### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

WE know that God is good and we know that everything that God does is good; but the fact is, in this universe created by God, we find evil. We read in the Word of God that "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." How then could evil ever enter if God is good and if God made everything? It does not fully answer the question by saying, "An enemy hath done this," for then the natural question arises, "Who made the enemy?"

There are those who hold that there was a necessity of evil's entering for the developing and perfecting of free moral agents, that unless there is such a contest there would be no developing of strength. If evil is absolutely necessary, then evil must have had an eternal beginning; and evil would be necessary in God, so that He could be His best and His unfallen creatures become their very best. In consequence of this line of reasoning, some of the old divines held the necessity of both good and evil ever existing and contending. Augustine, before he was thoroughly converted, held such a conception and some of it seemed to



cling to him afterward. Some of the pagan religions go further and have two gods, a good god and a bad god as their explanation of the problem of good and evil.

There are Christians who reason from the blessings that accrue from the overcoming of evil that evil is a necessity.

We thoroughly recognize the fact that there has to be the exercise of the power of choice for the development of moral agents, and to exercise such power of choice there must be two objects that may be chosen. All moral progress is produced by such exercise. God could have made man as a mere machine, but he would not have been created in the image and after the likeness of God. He never would nor could have morally and spiritually developed. God can create moral and spiritual agents, but such agents can be perfected only by the exercise of the power of choice in fellowship with God's will and choice. We emphatically declare that, altho all this is true, it was not and is not God's plan and highest will that any of His free agents should ever go into sin to develop. In other words, sin is not a necessity for the highest development of God's creatures. If it were necessary, then the highest type of free moral agents would have had to sin and then conquer it. If it had been necessary to sin in order to reach the highest moral and spiritual development, then the Lord Jesus Christ would of necessity have had to

sin. The highest development of humanity is found in the Lord Jesus Christ when He was made man. Likewise, if sin were necessary for the highest development, all the angels who have never fallen, ought to fall in order to perfection. In these two cases we certainly see that sin was not a necessity for the perfection of the creature, nor was it God's highest plan.

Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, one objects and says, "But He was tempted and how could a person who was truly righteous and holy be tempted?" It is true that He was tempted, but He never yielded to temptation. We need to have it written in our hearts, and realized in our experience, that temptation is not sin. The harboring and yielding to it are sins. Often the enemy says when we are tempted, "Now you have thought about a certain sin, you may as well do it." Say, "Get thee behind me, Satan, I will not yield one inch." It may not be possible at times to prevent thoughts of sin from being hurled into our mind, but we can refuse them, and we will become a stronger man or a stronger woman immediately. Temptation is not sin.

This raises another question: How could we be tempted if there was no evil in the world? Suppose there were just God and you in the universe and you were good and, we know, God is good; how could there be two things to choose? There certainly could be, and both of them seem pretty

good too. You could choose God and that certainly would be good; and, on the other hand, you could choose yourself, and that usually seems good and might not seem so very bad before there was a sinful fall. When God created the angels and all the glorious beings that He originally created, everything was good; but they could not develop as moral beings unless they had the power of choice. There was no evil in the universe of God, but they could choose God or themselves first. The instant they chose themselves that was selfishness and self-will, because the highest good was promoted by the choice of God and sin entered by the choice of self. Selfishness is the root of all sin, it is in every sin that there is. You can not name one that does not have selfishness as a root, and yet it looks so innocent to choose one's self. There can be a selfish and hence a sinful ambition to attain even great spirituality. Evil is always mixed with some element of good, and that is why it is so deceitful.

There is not the slightest doubt that the first temptation that was accepted had, in a most subtle way, a large proportion of good mingled with disguised selfishness. There was no Satan, originally; but God's plan was in effect: "I will give them the power of choice, I will give them spiritual discernment, but they will have to choose. They are pure, but not perfected yet." One can be born with the finest heritage, he can inherit from the

most noble ancestors, he can have the germ of great ability as a statesman, or an architect, or a poet, or a mathematician—he can inherit the germ of that ability, and yet he needs to develop it. Our moral nature amounts to nothing without development through the exercise of choice. There is no necessity of committing sin for our development. There is no necessity of evil in the universe for development, else there would have to be evil in eternity. That is absolutely unthinkable, that is blasphemous, if we were thinking it with seriousness. We reason from the terms of a fallen world. We do not say that God does not give strength and blessing from the overcoming of evil after we have gone into it. Praise God, He can do that! God is so great that, notwithstanding His highest plan has not yet been accomplished, when there has been a perversion of His plan (that is what sin is, that is what wrong is, something getting twisted, something being perverted), notwithstanding that, God can work and overrule all evil for good to those who trust Him. He can take all the drunkards and outcasts and every sinner that has not been won, and God is so great He can bring good out of their sin; but that is not God's highest method.

God desires to teach us through communion and the power of choice along every line every time. Another objects and says, "Then there would be many things about sin that you would not

know." There might be some things about sin that you would not know. For this you can be thankful. Such things have to be forgotten, blotted out, displaced by good; but whatever about sin would make for your moral development, that would be known. We have some conviction of sin when we are young Christians; but it is not until we receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit, greater light, that we get our deepest conviction of sin, that we really see sin as it is. We may have committed sins before and asked God to forgive; but we did not know what *sin* was. After we yielded fully to God and let Him come in and fill us with His Spirit, then the heinousness of sin and the consequences of sin became so real to us that we were broken down before God. We knew then through the teaching of the Holy Spirit more about sin than through any experience that any of us ever had.

God teaches us of sin not only in reference to ourselves but also in reference to others. Many a parent or loved one learns much about sin through endeavoring to hold and help another who is bent on following that devious path. Such a one often realizes the terribleness of sin more than the one who indulges in sin.

It is not necessary for a physician to have every disease he treats. Pity the physician if he had to suffer every disease he treats! He never would have any time to practise his profession, he would

always be in the hospital. We are sure that he would die before he finished the category of diseases. However, a man who is a wise physician knows more about the disease than the patient does. He has learned it another way.

People who go into sin have become mesmerized by Satan's wiles and have committed the worst sins without a full realization of their guilt. The deepest conviction of sin is that which comes through the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, revealing the pure white light of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know what black is when we see the white. God's method is by communion. He says; "I will guide thee with mine eye." "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Ps. 32:8, 9). "Why do you always want to have a terribly hard time to learn the lessons? I want to teach you, I will teach you the lessons without having to put on the bit and bridle, if you will trust Me, but if you will not, you will have to learn by a sadder method."

Let us consider the angels, all created equal. What would develop them morally and spiritually? Exercising the power of choice was one of the methods. What would they have to choose? Choose God and realize to some extent what it would be if they refused God and chose themselves. As they continued in this path their les-

sons would become more complex. All would progress, some more than others (errors of judgment are not sins), and those who made the greatest progress became the greatest angels, and those who made the least progress were the smaller angels. God is no respecter of persons, and He made them all equal at first. Those that appropriated more of God became stronger and stronger. In this way some of the angelic beings became greater than others and had positions nearer to God. They continued by communion and the power of choice, just as the Lord Jesus Christ was developed when He came down here—and how wonderful He became! One of the greatest was a good angel, he was not called “Satan” then, for Satan means “adversary.” When Satan advanced he began feeling how great he was, he chose himself before God; and all those he influenced fell with him. God foresaw that—the disruption of His plan and the entrance of evil; and His marvelous power and wisdom were sufficient, and so He *had* the redemption prepared in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen something of Sin and its Cause and we know something of its Consequences, and the Cure is the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Evil in its nature was not eternal in the past, therefore it can not possibly be eternal in the future.*

### XIII

## A SANE AND SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF PUNISHMENT

THE text, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7), contains many of the principles that obtain in a true doctrine of punishment. We will note some of these principles.

*The Certainty of Punishment.* One of the elements that makes punishment effective is its certainty. If a man thinks that there is a chance for him to escape the punishment for wrong doing, he may take that chance. Every one needs to learn that this law of certainty has no exceptions. There is no chance about it; what you sow, you reap. Every sin has its certain consequences. This is true even of the wrongdoer who thinks that he has escaped the working of this law. He is mistaken. The evil has already wrought damage to his character and one day its direful consequence will be manifest, unless divinely dealt with. Every offer of salvation; every presentation of more or new light; and every opportunity proffered, brings added responsibility. Every rejection increases guilt and multiplies the conse-



quences as a punishment. From this law there is no escape. When this principle of punishment is understood, it furnishes one of the strongest deterrents to evil doing and also to the rejection of light.

*The Measure of Punishment.* The normal harvest exceeds by many fold the sowing. This is a wise provision in reference to punishment. The enjoyment or gain that comes through sin is very small in proportion to the evil consequences that naturally come to the one who so yields. This is one of the natural laws of the harvest. God means this law to cause men to halt and to cease from sin. Sin costs the sinner too dear, it cost God His Only Begotten Son.

*The Limitations of Punishment.* The harvest is limited by the quantity and character of the seed. Punishment is graded in proportion to light and opportunity. The law of justice will obtain. Some will be "beaten with few stripes" and some with "many." "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47, 48). Punishment, as well as reward, is to be graded. A finite sin will have a

finite punishment: nothing else would be justice.

God Himself has set bounds to the consequences of evil, whereas to good there are practically no limitations. In the Commandments, given to Israel (Ex. 20:5, 6), we find written, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments." The reason for the advantages of the blessings of righteousness over wickedness, lies in the fact that the consequences of sin are under the laws of fallen nature, and that in righteousness God has introduced His eternal and unbounded nature that never fell.

How low may erring souls descend?  
 I ask my troubled heart.  
 Only as deep as depth of sea,  
 Or to earth's lowest part.

How high may trusting souls aspire?  
 I asked my spirit free.  
 The boundless steeps of heaven high  
 Are surely meant for thee.

O love of God, how great! how good!  
 That holds the wrong in bounds  
 And offers *right* the heights of bliss,  
 Where God with glory crowns.

*The Kinds of Punishment.* "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," implies that the punishment will be of the same kind as the sins.

Sins of the flesh bring forth consequences in the flesh. Sins of the mind beget mental suffering. Sins of the heart bring forth blasted affections and emotions. Sins of the spirit blight our highest nature on its Godward side. This law is certainly one of the harvest laws and is also in accord with the principles of justice. Jacob cheated his brother Esau, and he himself was deceived ten times (Gen. 31:41). Israel failed to keep God's law of the sabbaths and they reaped seventy years of captivity as a consequence (Jer. 17:27; 25:11; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21). When we think that every thought, word and deed will bring forth a harvest after its kind, we certainly need to take warning, to "flee from the wrath to come," and to bring forth "fruits of righteousness."

An old treatise on Law concerning crimes and punishments sounds very modern and confirms the principles that we have thus far discovered:

"Crimes", it says, "are more effectually prevented by the certainty than the severity of the punishment. Hence, in a magistrate, the necessity of vigilance, and in a judge, of implacability, which, that it may become a useful virtue, should be joined to a mild legislation. The certainty of a small punishment will make a stronger impression than the fear of one more severe, if attended with the hopes of escaping; for it is the nature of mankind to be terrified at the approach of the smallest inevitable evil, whilst hope, the best gift of heaven, hath the power of dispelling the apprehension of a greater; especially if supported by the examples of impunity, which weakness or avarice too frequently afford.

"If punishments be very severe, men are naturally led to

the perpetration of other crimes, to avoid the punishment due to the first. The countries and times most notorious for severity of punishments are also those in which the most bloody and inhuman actions and the most atrocious crimes are committed; for the hand of the legislator and assassin were directed by the same spirit of ferocity; which, on the throne, dictated laws of iron to slaves and savages, and, in private, instigated the subject to sacrifice one tyrant to make room for another.

"In proportion as punishments become more cruel, the minds of men, as a fluid rises to the same height as that which surrounds it, grow hardened and insensible; and, the force of the passions still continuing, in the space of a hundred years, the wheel terrifies no more than formerly the prison. That a punishment may produce the effect required, it is sufficient that the evil it occasions should exceed the good expected from the crime; including in the calculation the certainty of the punishment, and the privation of the expected advantage. All severity beyond that is superfluous, and therefore tyrannical."<sup>1</sup>

That is simply studying the subject of punishment from the standpoint of the ordinary law, and those punishments and the principles there enunciated are the principles that commend themselves "to every man's conscience," and are the very principles we find in God's book.

*The Author of Punishment.* God is not the author of punishment, even tho He is over all and makes everything that happens serve His purposes in the government of His universe. It is the creature who is the author of sin and is thus responsible for its consequences. Sin has its origin in the creature's acting independently of

<sup>1</sup> Beccaria on Crimes and Punishments, quoted in Thomas C. Upham, *A Philosophic and Practical Treatise on the Will*, page 184. (Published by William Hyde, Portland, 1834). For translation of this treatise of Beccaria see J. A. Farrar's *Crimes and Punishments*.

God. God is not the author of anything that is evil. He never made any of the consequences of sin any more than He made the sin. God's creature is the only one to blame. God did not make a fallen nature. It resulted from the fall of angel and man. God never made a punishment for sin. Every punishment for sin is manufactured by the one committing the sin, "Whatsoever a *man soweth.*" Our punishment springs from our own sowing. This consideration dispels all detraction in reference to God's character and Word. The place of punishment referred to in Matt. 25:41 as "prepared for the devil and his angels," may be better translated, "prepared *by* the devil and his angels." Wicked men share this punishment because their sins were similar to those of the evil angels, and they cooperated with the evil angels and followed their suggestions.

*The Purpose of Punishment.* We gather from the preceding consideration some of God's purposes in punishment. God's original law was framed to increase the fruitage of goodness by the creature's sowing goodness. When nature and man fall, God's law still works, but on the lower plane of punishment. Even on this plane all punishment in God's economy is:

According to justice. There is no vindictive wrath in God Himself, but the working of fallen nature sometimes has that appearance! it is only in appearance. God always and only purposeth

good to every creature of His. Accordingly, He has twined about the very consequence of sin high, holy, and beneficial purposes.

1. He uses the punishment of sin as a preventive. This is for the breaker of His law, that he may be prevented from other infractions of it. God also has in mind the deterring of others who may learn or witness the terrible consequences of sin.

2. Punishment is also disciplinary. The root-meaning of one of the chief words for punishment is that of pruning. The Lord of the harvest never prunes to kill, but to help. The persistence of the consequences of sin long after the sin is forgiven by God is doubtless intended so to deepen and *burn in* the lesson that the cause of punishment may be cured. God purposes to establish in righteousness, that the creature, even if he could, would not yield to sin.

3. Punishment is also meant by God to be self-corrective. This is exprest in Jer. 2:19, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee." This still is disciplinary, but it implies that in the punishment itself is a self-corrective element. The fermentation of liquids tends to their own purification. The principle of the modern disposal plant is that one germ of impurity devours another till all their malignity is destroyed. God tells us what the harvest of sin is; "The wages of sin is death" (Rom.

6:23). This denotes all kinds of death, answering to the different kinds of sin. Sin always attempts to kill God. Its culmination was reached when it slew the Christ, but His death overcame "him (Satan) that had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14). And through our Lord's death all death has been potentially destroyed, and will be actually and historically destroyed before the end of the ages, when the Son hands over the kingdom to the Father: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." God has thus limited the extent of the consequences of evil. It, in one sense, wears itself out. Let no one say however that Christ, the Savior, is not needed. We have already indicated that slaying Him only promoted His plan of redemption. It cut away all our nature of flesh and blood that He had taken, and in Him we and the whole creation were potentially set free from all corruption and all harvests that are the consequence of sin and sins. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2).

What more does any one want than a punishment for sin that is fully adequate; that accords with absolute justice; that has the strongest sanctions that can be imagined, because not only of their greatness, but also because of their continuance even after forgiveness; a punishment that is not unnatural and unreasonable but that grows out of the creature's selfish actions; a punishment

that so closely and continuously disciplines its author that the release can come only by an utter and forever putting away of the cause; a punishment that is not manufactured by an angry God, but whose cause and development depend entirely upon the creature and a fallen nature; a punishment that vindicates God's character for goodness, for He makes sin, even against its will, work for righteousness and also destroy its own harvest of all kinds of death, through the death that it wrought in His only and first begotten Son! This is a Sane and Scriptural Doctrine of Punishment. "For God hath shut them all up for unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again. For out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things: to whom be glory for the ages. Amen" (Rom. 11:32-36, literal).



## XIV

### THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD ILLUMINED

“YE . . . pass over judgment and the love of God” (Luke 11:42). These words, that were spoken of the Pharisees in reference to their lives, may be applied to most of us in reference to our conception of the judgments of God. In fact, the love of God is rarely associated with the judgments of God. Even when judgment is discerned as having a loving purpose in reference to believers, it is always thought of as having a purpose of another kind toward unbelievers, as if God could change His nature, or as if God could have two purposes, one of love and another of hate. The philosophy of God’s judgments is too little understood.

We have said in the chapter on Punishment that God does not manufacture any punishment, that it is the sinner who makes his own punishment, “for whatsoever *a man* soweth, that shall he also reap.” This is true of God’s judgments. God does not manufacture, or arbitrarily get up certain judgments for certain cases. Every judgment of God is the fruit and the natural conse-

quence of self-will, rebellion, and sin; and has had its source in the creature separated from God. Our God of Love would not have permitted such self-will with its direful consequences unless He could make it work ultimate good.

There is an erroneous idea that, when one accepts forgiveness of his sins, he thereby escapes all the consequences of his sins. This is by no means the case, as every one may know by experience. The consequences last until there is no longer need of their warning and judging lesson. Some of them continue to the end of this life, and even extend much further.

The power of the cross of Christ is too little apprehended. It is true that salvation is spoken of as the initial step of the Christian life; *viz.*, accepting Him as one's personal Savior and then, by complete surrender, believing for and receiving the fulness of His Spirit; but this is but the bare beginning. Salvation in its fulness is a continuous process. We are perfect when our hearts are entirely set Godward, that is, perfect in love and purpose; but by no means are we perfected. The Apostle Paul many years after His conversion and sanctification wrote in Phil. 3:10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." It is one thing to be converted, and another to be fully consecrated; but the work that takes time is this of conformity

to His death. More and more, even in his old age, the Apostle Paul longed for this conformity, and welcomed everything that would make him appropriate it. This is what is meant by the power of the cross in a life; for the cross means judgment. Judgment in all that is carnal and selfish, all that is worldly, and all that is demoniacal or Satanic. But "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14, margin). (See also Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20 and Col. 2:14.) In other words, in Christ the work is wrought out *for* us; but that does not mean that it does not have to be wrought out *in* us; and to be wrought out in us may involve pain, suffering, loss, heart-breaks, and anguish. There is no merit in any kind of suffering, and it is not the suffering that saves us; but through it there is preparation to receive more of Christ. Every advance step demands deeper judgment, and every advance step is nothing less nor more than a larger appropriation of Himself. If I desire more grace, I may never take it unless I have the spur of some great need. Christ "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). "The disciple is not above his Master; but . . . shall be perfected as his Master" (Luke 6:40, margin).

When we understand that we have to be made perfect even "as our Master," we can clearly see

that there is no escape from the process. If we play truant and endeavor to escape any lesson, we will not only be made to learn the lesson from which we thought we could flee, but also we will have the other lesson added, which is, that we can not permanently flee anything that God has for us to be or to do. We know the goal and standard that He has set for mankind. "Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13, margin). This is not only His goal for the elect, who are the first fruits; but also for the whole harvest of mankind, when God becomes "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Be not deceived, no one can escape any of the process of the cross of Christ. We may take a longer time to it, but we can not escape it. The seeds that will spring forth into God's judgments are in one's own nature, and in one's own words and deeds. There is no such thing as "chance" in the universe of God. It is the same law for the sinner as for the saint. "God is no respecter of persons." There is no other way than the way of Christ. It is this path that brings all the blessings for which our hearts yearn. Our spiritual imaginings fall so *far short!* Our prayers are offered in too great blindness, He will "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

It is necessary to note that if we are to be made

perfect in the same manner as Christ, we need to find the source of our suffering and judgments not alone in ourselves, but in others. There is much vicarious suffering in the world to-day, fathers and mothers suffer for children; children suffer for parents; wives suffer for husbands and husbands for wives; friends suffer for friends, etc. The Christian worker suffers for his converts; the missionary suffers for the heathen; the pastor for his people; and the people for the pastor. A Christian's judgments and sufferings, to be like Christ's, need to be more for others than for himself. What a field is provided in this life, and what fields in the ages to come! God alone knoweth; and has made all things ready for our perfecting. It is but the working out of the principle of the cross in us and through us for all time.

This principle explains why the Apostle glories in the cross of Christ. This makes clear the statement in Rom. 5:3, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Tribulation is not pleasant; it involves suffering. It is a judgment; it is a portion of the cross. Why glory in it? Because when taken aright, it leads us to take more of the very patience of Christ. We do not have any for the new trial, and He gives us His patience. It was through recognizing the necessity and beneficence of judgments that the Apostle again said "Most gladly therefore will I

rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, than am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). There is no virtue in judgment for judgment's sake, nor in manufacturing some new cross for ourselves. There will be His cross that meets us and brings its judgments. He will make all of His judgments be in order to grace. Let that suffice.

When we understand that this law is inexorable, that it will keep on following us till we learn its lesson, and all blessing and the beatific vision with the unveiled face is ours, we will gladly welcome the next judgment. This explains the seeming paradox of the Psalmist when he said, "I have hoped in Thy judgments" (Ps. 119:43, 120). We will never separate love from God's judgments (Luke 11:42). We will love the cross and welcome it. "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments at all times" (Ps. 119:20).

While we are writing this, we have brought to our attention the recent decision of a certain criminal who was condemned to death. He was told that he could choose the time of his execution, either on Wednesday or Thursday of the same week. He said, "I will choose Wednesday; since it has to be, I want it to be over with." Just as

soon as sinner and saint get to realize the absolute certainty of having to endure judgments in order to the full conformity to Christ, there will be the sooner yielding, and the learning what God wants us to learn, and the becoming what He wants us to be.

Notice in Jude, verses 14, 15, we have revealed to us the purpose and the outcome of the Lord's coming and His judgments; *viz.*, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all." The return of judgment is always unto righteousness (Ps. 94:15). The Father suffers judgment to come upon us only to bless us. If we learn our lessons speedily, and judge ourselves, we will escape many judgments (1 Cor. 11:31). The redemption of Zion is with judgment (Isa. 1:27). And when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). Our Lord will keep on "till He have set judgment in the earth" (Isa. 42:4). Christians will not escape, for "judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17).

If this principle of divine love in judgment were seen, the words "judge" and "judgment" would never have been translated "damn" and damnation." The usage of language also precludes such a translation. The word "to judge" (*krinein*) signifies "to judge," and is so translated over eighty times. In one place, 2 Thes. 2:12, it is incorrectly translated "damned." "That they all

might be damned who believed not the truth." It would make great confusion to use the word "damn" in most of these eighty cases; for instance, in Acts 16:15, in place of "if ye have judged me to be faithful," it would read, "if ye have damned me to be faithful." This would make gross nonsense. Only a preconceived theory would cause any one to translate "to judge" by the word "damn." It is contrary to the normal meaning of the word.

The word "to condemn" (*katakrinein*) occurs nineteen times in the New Testament; in every instance but two it is translated "condemn." In these two, Mark 16:16, it reads, "but he that believeth not shall be damned"; and in Rom. 14:23, "he that doubteth is damned if he eat." It should have the same translation, "condemned," in every case.

The word "judging" (*krisis*) denotes the process of judging. In over forty passages this word is rendered "judgment," in three, it is rendered "damnation." These places are Matt. 23:33; Mark 3:29; and John 5:29. If we would try to apply this word "damnation" to all the passages where this word occurs, it would be foolish; for instance, it is the same word translated "judgment" in John 5:30. It reads, "As I hear, I judge, and My judging (*krisis*) is just." To be consistent, this verse should read, "As I hear, I damn, and My damning is just." Any one would know that



this is not what is meant. All these words are stretched to bolster the false theory of an eternal hell. We have learned in the chapter on "Time and Eternity" that the word translated "eternity" and "everlasting" can mean no longer than time lasts; they never mean "eternal" or even "everlasting."

The word "judgment" (*krima*) denotes the sentence pronounced, or the result of judging. This word is used thirty times in the New Testament. Fourteen times it is translated "judgment"; Matt. 7:2; John 9:39; Acts 24:25; Rom. 2:2; 2:3; 5:16; 11:33, etc., and seven times the word "damnation" is used, Matt. 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47; Rom. 3:8; 13:2; 1 Cor. 11:29; and 1 Tim. 5:12. The reason the word "damnation" is employed seems to be to so construe the words referring to judgment that they could signify only eternal punishment. This is contrary to the very nature of God and to the correct meaning of the words.

The judgment on Hymenaeus and Alexander was their delivery over to Satan. This meant sickness and death, even instant death. The purpose was loving; viz., "That they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20).

The case of the wicked man in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:5), was "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh." Here, through this judgment, Paul desired to have the

man's spirit "saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Here is salvation, at least reclamation, after death; and judgment is part of the means used. Again, in the passage in 1 Pet. 3:18, etc., our Lord, after His death, "went and preached unto the spirits in prison"; who "were disobedient . . . in the days of Noah." Here is preaching to those who had refused the light and preaching of Noah. Especially notice the reference to judgment in the next chapter; *viz.*, 1 Pet. 4:6. He is speaking of the same preaching, for this chapter should not be divided from the former one where it is divided. The Apostle Peter continues and says, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Here was the gospel preached to the dead. Here also is judgment on the dead. Here is the Gospel, with judgment, bringing salvation; for they were changed to "live according to God in the spirit."

We have known many in this life who never yielded to God till they met with some great bereavement, sorrow or loss. God used the sorrow and judgment to make them willing to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. "Start not at the plow that makes deep furrows in thy soul, God purposeth a crop."

In the cases given above, we learn that God will use the judgments, punishments and sorrows of

the life to come as one of the means to bring souls to Him. The judgments are not the Savior, but they are sanctified to prepare the way for Him. Salvation in this age, or any age, is only through the Christ.

## XV

### UNPARDONABLE SINS

“FOR ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, tho he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb. 12: 17).

This text has reference to Esau (verse 16) selling the right to his birthright; and afterward, altho he wept sore, he could not get it restored. This is one of the texts that have been used by the enemy to torment oversensitive Christians, and to lead them to believe that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and for them there is nothing left but an unending hell. Every pastor of experience has met a number of such cases. This text, or some other text, has become the ground of their despair. Melancholia, or even a permanent insanity, has often resulted. The book of Hebrews affords several of these texts, and the enemy has made sad use of them.

We will speak at first only of this text, and may discover a principle which will be helpful in understanding a number of others.

This Scripture seems to contradict the words of our Lord when, in answer to Peter's question in The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, chapter

18:21, 22, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." This, evidently, means that we should put no limit to our spirit of forgiveness. If our Lord teaches us to have such a spirit of forgiveness, He must desire us to understand that there is no limit to his forgiveness. In our day it is certainly taught that any one who turns to the Lord will find forgiveness.

It may yield some light if we ask what it was that Esau sought to obtain when "he found no place of repentance, tho he sought it carefully with tears." Was it his salvation that he was seeking? Certainly not. Was it forgiveness? No, he could have that. When he lost his birthright, he was still a son; and, as a son, received the blessing from God through his father. In Heb. 11:20 we read that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." Esau received a blessing also; but he had forfeited the honor and reward that was offered him first. It is well to note that in Israel, altho the one born first naturally was offered the birthright first, other requirements were necessary. This may be seen in Jacob's own sons. The first born and the second born did not get this honor; but it was given as a reward to Judah and to Joseph.

1 Cor. 3:11-15 teaches us that there are some

who are not only to be saved, but also rewarded; while others lose their reward and are saved as through fire.

The interpretation of the whole book of Hebrews turns on this thought of winning the honor and reward of a first-born one. This honor was held open for the whole Hebrew nation, but some would forfeit this privilege as Esau did. It is not a question of salvation; but a question of having position with the Lord in His kingdom.

This is entirely parallel to the children of Israel who were redeemed out of Egypt. The attaining of the Land of Promise was a reward. It is impossible to believe that all who perished in the wilderness were lost forever; all perished except Caleb and Joshua, the children, and many of the priests. All who died missed the reward of entering the Land. We know that even Moses forfeited this privilege, but no one believes that he was lost. Fifteen hundred years after, we find him in the Land of Promise talking to our Lord. Through sin one may lose an arm or an eye; if he repents God will forgive him, but he does not get back his eye or his arm. We know, however, through God's help and grace, that he may do much more with the arm and eye left him than he would ever have done with two arms and two eyes. Repentance may not bring back forfeited birth-rights, but God has other blessings waiting faith and fidelity.

Altho the Bible says clearly that "all Israel shall be saved" ultimately (Rom. 11: 25, 26), it appears that many of them may miss the millennial kingdom and not be resurrected till its close. We do not wonder that they may weep as Esau wept; but, for that period, in place of a glorious kingdom, they are shut out in the "outer darkness." In the spirit of Esau they may say, "If I only had been more faithful and self-sacrificing!"

In the parable of the virgins it is not a question of salvation; but it is one of honor and privilege. The foolish and wise virgins had light. The light of the foolish was diminishing (Matt. 25: 8, margin). They miss the reward. It is not a question of salvation, but of reward. Even when the foolish virgins went and bought more oil and became, typically, Spirit-filled, they were too late for the kingdom honors. It is one thing to be saved, and another to be saved "with eonian glory" (2 Tim. 2: 10, literal). It is usually taught that those who are saved will have no regret. The Word of God teaches differently in reference to Israel. He pictures even "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The same principle certainly obtains for us, and the Apostle Paul speaking in our dispensation said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." What was he striving for? To win the birthright on a

higher plane than that of Israel. The Apostle knew that he was saved, that is, accepted of God; but he was fearful of missing the honor and glory that God held out for him. If he missed he might weep, like Esau, but he would *never* get it again.

If we examine Heb. 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," we shall learn that this text has application to the unconverted, but it is especially address to those who have the beginning of salvation, that they may not miss the reward of a first-born one and the glory of the salvation that is to be revealed when Jesus comes (1 Peter 1:5).

This is evidently the principle that is involved in a proper understanding of Heb. 6:4, 6, that "it is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance." The particular point in question is lost irrevocably; *viz.*, the birthright of a first born one. Heb. 10:26 is likewise address to Hebrew Christians; and these are told that they may lose the birthright utterly if they despise their birthright. In Heb. 10:35, 36, the Apostle exhorts them to "cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Also Heb. 10:39, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Only the faithful Hebrews



will be resurrected at the first resurrection. The rest of them will not be raised till the first-born ones reign for a thousand years. The overcomers are the first-born ones and receive their birthright.

Compare with this 1 Cor. 11:30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Here were believers in the church at Corinth that were suffering certain sicknesses, and others, death as a judgment because of their failing to judge themselves. This does not mean that all such are lost, but they lose something and have to suffer the judgment of God.

The Church has eliminated all discipline for the righteous in the life to come, and, as a consequence, has no place for these texts. We do not teach that the righteous suffer punishment in the life to come; but if there is to be progress, there must be training and discipline. Suffering is not punishment when there is no guilt. When all sins have been forgiven, there is no guilt. If any criminal, because of guilt, was condemned to go through the toils and suffering that Admiral Peary had to endure in his attempts to explore the Polar regions and to reach the North Pole, he would have no other word for it than that it was an unendurable hell. To Admiral Peary, it was suffering; but, because it was in line with his ambition; because it would bring him honor and also blessing and knowledge to his fellow men, he gladly and

voluntarily endured it. The Master was made "perfect through sufferings" and "the disciple is not above his Master"; but must be made perfect as his Master (Luke 6:40, margin). To the Christian who thus suffers in this life, it may be said, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross," etc.

It will help greatly in the understanding of the New Testament to see that, except in the texts that speak of the ultimate redemption, the subject is in reference to winning the birthright and becoming a first-born one. These are sometimes called "the elect," that is, the first-fruits or earnest of the final glorious harvest. The elect are the first to come. It is a fearful loss not to be among the elect or first-born ones. They will enjoy the glory all through the ages, while those who miss it will not enter in till the last age. "God is no respecter of persons," every one who is saved will be saved by grace; and every one who misses the mark, even for the ages, will have no one but himself to blame.

Another text that is especially connected with the unpardonable sin is found in Matt. 12:32; "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." This text looks formidable at the first glance, but it is not difficult if we rightly

divide the Word of Truth. We need to notice that the word "world" in this verse is the word for "age," and it should read, "it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come."

We know from the diagram of the Ages (See Chapter on the Ages Presented) that this age is this present age, and the age to come is the millennial age. This text may reasonably imply that some sins committed in this age may be forgiven in the Millennium, but not this particular one against the Holy Ghost.

We have learned that the great age of universal reconciliation and acceptance of the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ is not this age nor the millennial age but the great age which follows it, *viz.*, the age of the ages. Some sins are so grievous that the sinner is given up or given over to them, so that it may not be of use to plead further with him; but in the final age he will accept the proffered mercy. The most obstinate class will endure punishment and discipline till this last age. This is the time of "the dispensation of the fulness of times" when He gathers "together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). (See chapter on The Great Neglected Age.)

Another text that needs examination is 1 John 5:16, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There

is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." The question here discust is a totally different matter from what is usually thought in connection with unpardonable sins.

First, it is well to note that the one who commits this sin is converted, for he is called a "brother." The question of being finally lost is out of the question for those who hold that the Father will lose none that are committed to His hand (John 10:27-29). This text is akin to the one already referred to in 1 Cor. 11:30 where many in the church of Corinth were weak and sickly and many had fallen asleep. These last words imply that they had committed a sin unto death. It was of no use to pray for their recovery when they became ill; they must die as truly as the unbelieving Israel died on the way to the Land of Promise. The physical chastisement of death had to be meted out to them. Their spiritual destiny after death is quite another question. In 1 Cor. 5:5, the Apostle Paul, under divine direction, tells the church at Corinth "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This deliverance to Satan certainly brought sickness and death, but it was in order to salvation at the coming of the Lord."

In Jer. 14:11 the Lord said, "Pray not for this people for their good." And in Jer. 15:1, He says; "Tho Moses and Samuel stood before Me,

yet My mind could not be toward this people." The same principle as the "sin unto death" (1 John 5:16, 17) obtains here. The Kingdom of Judah in Jeremiah's time had despised all warnings and gone deeper and deeper into sin. They had all sinned, some unto captivity and some unto death. Prayer could not avail. No one could pray in the Spirit and in faith for their deliverance. It would have wrought more harm than good to have such a prayer answered. Their highest good demanded exile and captivity. But this is not final: God still has purposes for Israel. In our day a great stride has been made toward their return to their own land, their repentance and salvation. The same book of Jeremiah contains, in chapter 16:14, 15, these words "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." A few Israelites in past times have returned, but this great promise has not yet been fulfilled. The rejection of Israel was for a time, even a long time. In the days of the Apostles Paul wrote to the Romans (11:26), "And so all Israel shall be saved."

It is the failure to notice the distinction between

the time when God's plan was to save a first-fruit, and the time when He will have every knee bow (Phil. 2:10); and also to distinguish what is for time and yet not for eternity, that brings confusion to the understanding of the Scriptures and dishonor to the character of God.

## XVI

### THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST *VERSUS* THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM

THERE has been much said in theology of the federal or representative headship of Christ, and by its application many questions have been solved, at least in part. We would not detract from any truth thus ascertained, clarified or established; but a mere federal headship is true only through an existing deeper and more fundamental fact in reference to the headship of our Lord; *viz.*, a real and vital headship.

In 1 Cor. 11:3 we read, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ." In Acts 17:24-28, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as tho He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, . . . For we are also His offspring." This text is usually taken to mean that all races have sprung from Adam. The word "blood" is not in several of the best manuscripts, but whether it is or not, that fact does not militate against the truth that we have in mind.

There is not the slightest doubt that both the Bible and present-day studies of the races of mankind prove that there were and are races on the earth who have not descended from Adam.<sup>1</sup> Hence comes the answer to the questions: "Where did Cain get his wife?" "Of whom was Cain afraid when he departed from his own people?" "Where did he get help to build a city?"

In Gen. 4:14 (literal) Cain said, "Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Adamic domain (not earth); and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." This implies inhabitants beside the Adamites.

In Gen. 4:16, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod," literally, the land of the Nomads. Evidently there were wandering tribes at that time.

In Gen. 4:17, "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." It certainly implies a large number of people besides Cain and his wife and son to help him build the city and to occupy it.

We have in the Bible the word *Adam* used for Adam and also for his descendants, and also the word *ish* which means "man" in general. The

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Roosevelt in *The National Geographic Magazine*, Feb. 1916; and H. F. Osborn, *Men of the Old Stone Age* (Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y.).



word *Adam* has no feminine form and no plural. The word *ish* has a feminine form, *ishshah*, and the words *ish* and *ishshah* may signify husband and wife, or man and woman. In several passages of the Scriptures the descendants of Adam and men of other races seem to be contrasted.

Ps. 49: 1, 2, "Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world. Both low and high, rich and poor, together." The words "low and high" if literally rendered, would read "sons of Adam and sons of man(*ish*)."

Ps. 62: 9, "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie." Here also the literal translation is "sons of Adam" and "sons of man."

Isa. 2: 9 should read, "The Adamite boweth down, and the man(*ish*) humbleth himself."

Isa. 5: 15 should also read, "And the Adamite shall bow down, and the man(*ish*) shall humble himself."

One has summed up the usage of these words in Scripture thus:

"It is plain that the rules of literal translation require us to regard *ish* as a general appellation including *Adam*, and *Adam* denoting the first man so-called and any and all of his descendants, tho it may generally be rendered 'man' or 'men' because the Old Testament seldom speaks of any other human beings than descendants of Adam, unless it be so incidentally and distinctively." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Adam and the Adamite*, by Dominick McCausland, Q.C. LL.D. (Richard Bentley & Sons, Fifth Edition, London.) Consult also *Preadamites* by Alexander Winchell, LL.D. (S. C. Griggs & Son, Chicago).

There is no doubt from the Biblical chronology that Adam lived about 6,000 years ago. He was the head of a race. The Bible is a book of redemption. It is principally a history of Adam's race, especially a history of the Hebrew branch of that race through which Christ came. There is no doubt that man, of some kind, has been on this earth a very long time, fifty or a hundred thousand years or more. It is also certain that there are races on the earth to-day whose genealogy can not be traced to Adam and whose history antedates the time of Adam. The discovery of such facts has led some to reject the Bible as the Word of God, whereas, if the Bible is thoroughly studied and Scripture compared with Scripture, the truthfulness of the Bible narrative is most certainly established.

In fact, the Bible itself only makes Adam the typical head of the race, and not the real head. Rom. 5:14, "Adam, who is a type of Him about to come" (literal). The fact is, men and angels and all things were originally created in Christ (Col. 1:16). He is not only the head of mankind (1 Cor. 11:3), but also of angels (Col. 2:10). Christ is, therefore, the one out of whom all sprang and even if the word "blood" is retained in Acts 17:26, we do not object to this; for the blood stands for the life, and in creating men and angels God used the life of His Son, the God-Man. The blood of Christ, even to us, must mean

more than the natural blood that was outpoured on the cross. The blood that was then outpoured was more than mere human blood, it was the life of the Son of Man and Son of God. His blood that is said to have purified the heavens is essentially spiritual blood, and the blood that cleanses our heart is the spiritual blood.

Christ was the Head, and mediated between the absolute God and all creation because He was the God-Man. All the light and life of the whole original creation was His Life and Light. There was no spiritual life or light apart from Him. When angels and men fell, the Light and Life of Christ in them was extinguished. The ground of the whole redeeming and atoning work rests in Christ; and it can be easily seen why He was the only One in the whole universe who could restore the fallen, for that which they needed besides forgiveness was His Life and Light renewed or born again in them. This is the reason that God sent His Son, —no one else would or could do what was needed to be done.

God's purpose in sending Adam to the earth seems to have been to bring the knowledge of God to the races dwelling upon it who had forgotten God. The command, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," in the light of the consideration above instanced, means far more than to cultivate and conquer the material earth. God evidently intended through Adam

to unfold His salvation to the fallen races. Adam failed; and in his fall God gave the promise of a coming Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, the Christ, who was not only the head of Adam and his descendants, but was the Head and therefore could be the Redeemer of every man.

Notwithstanding the failure of Adam, God's purpose is being carried out in some degree by the Adamites; *viz.*, the Caucasian race. We quote:<sup>3</sup>

"In the Caucasian alone, of all the inhabitants of the globe, we find a race who have always been in a state of active and progressive improvement of themselves and others. They are the parents and nurses of civilization and have ever been active in advancing the great interest of humanity . . . The depositories and missionaries of the religion that binds man to the true God whose instruments they have been for the expansion and extension of all that is great and good . . . This is rendered the more conspicuous by association with so many of his (Adam's) own lineage who devote their energies to deface the little that remains of God's image and degrade themselves and their fellow creatures to the moral level of the lowest specimens of humanity."

The flood was especially brought about on account of the sins of the Adamites, and it was their whole world, and not necessarily the whole world of the other races, that was destroyed by the flood. Gen. 6:7, when literally rendered, refers entirely to the Adamites. This interpretation makes the flood of Noah extend over the world of the Adamites, destroying man and beast except those saved alive in the ark. This would make the flood to

<sup>3</sup> Dominick McCausland, in work cited before.

be tremendously great, for by the time of Noah the descendants of Adam had probably widely extended. The world of the other nations not Adamites is not included in God's purpose in the judgment of the flood. Gen. 6:7 (literally), "I will destroy the Adamites whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air."

Gen. 6:7 needs a further remark. The context determines whether the word *Adam* should be translated Adam or the Adamites. The date of the flood by received chronology is 1656. The death of Adam was 930 (Gen. 5:5). The flood came 726 years after the death of Adam, therefore the word for "Adam," in Gen. 6:7, can only refer to his descendants, for Adam was dead.

The word for "earth" in Gen. 6:7 is not the ordinary word for "earth" but is the word *Adamah* which refers to only a portion of the earth. It can not be translated "earth" in Gen. 4:14, "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the *Adamah* (Adam's domain) . . . and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth (*eretz*). The text does not mean that God drove Cain out of the earth but out of the domain of Adam and he became a fugitive and vagabond in another part of the earth.

This word *Adamah*, or "domain of the Adamites," in Gen. 6:7, therefore indicates that the flood destroyed only the portion of the earth

inhabited by the descendants of Adam. This evidently was a very large portion, it was their world.

This understanding of the Scripture relieves the difficulty in reference to the size of the ark. It was a refuge for the men and animals of the world of the Adamites.

We are treating the headship of Christ and it matters not how many nations there are in this world, or any world, Christ is their Head. All have sprung from Him. The text, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," becomes larger and grander than is usually imagined. The two clauses are more than an equation, for there are far more in Christ than in Adam. These words are a simile and a comparison. Adam carried death to all who were in him, whereas, Christ carries life to all who were in Him. As Adam and all his descendants were in Christ, life is brought to all of them; and no matter how many other races were in Christ, salvation has been wrought out for them. The redemption, instead of being decreased, is increased to include every creature and the whole creation of God.

Let us remember that not Adam, but Christ, is "the Head of every man" (1 Cor. 11:3); and the Head of every angel (Col. 2:10); the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18); the Head of the whole creation (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:16). In this way alone will we appreciate Him in His greatness and as the vital center of Christianity and its complete redemption.

## XVII

### THE ETERNAL HUMANITY OF CHRIST

THE contents of this chapter do not have to be accepted for the general argument of the book to stand, but if the considerations here presented are understood, they carry with them a tremendous additional confirmation to the truthfulness of the conclusions reached.

Professor Laidlaw of Edinburgh wrote in *The Bible Doctrine of Man*:

"Earnest thinkers in theology have often sighed for some pathway that would lead direct from an original relation of the eternal Logos with the human race to the actual incarnation of the Redeemer. Some have even said that the theory of expiation can not retain its place in the thoughts of the Church unless it can be shown that the death of Christ as a propitiation and a sacrifice for the sins of men is the highest expression of an eternal relation between Christ and the human race.

"Doubtless there is something more in the great texts (Col. 1:15-17; Eph. 1:10-22; Rom. 8:18-23, etc.) which combine the relation of the Son to the universe with that of the glorified Redeemer to the 'restitution of all things' than the Church has ever formulated. In that direction there is theological territory to be possessed."

B. W. Dale to the same point wrote in his work on *The Atonement*:

"The relation of Christ to mankind is, however, only part of a larger question—the relation of Christ to the created

universe. The Church has been content to acknowledge that Christ created all things, and that in some sense He upholds all things. It has never felt any keen and practical interest in the nature of His permanent relation to the universe. In the dread of Pantheism, and in its eagerness to maintain the freedom and personality of the living God, it has rather shrunk from conceiving any other kind of relation between the Creator and the creation than that which exists between the builder of a house and the house he has built. But there are many passages in the New Testament which are inconsistent with such a conception as this."

We desire to study for a little the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, for "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and we doubt not that in Him will be found the solution of every difficulty and every mystery.

In respect to the great mystery of the God-man we have always felt it to be a difficulty to accept the usual doctrinal statement that He was not man until He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" and that ever after He had the indissoluble personality as the God-Man. It seemed to us as if the Godhead, in the Person of the Only Begotten Son, added something that it did not have before, and, as a consequence, was not absolutely complete in the past.

The text (John 6: 62), "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" rather startles us. We take the title "Son of man" as especially emphasizing His humanity. We have had no difficulty in accepting the pre-existence of His deity, but this Scripture seems to



assert the same of His humanity, *viz.*, that as "Son of man" as well as "Son of God" he had a pre-existence.

John 3:13 deserves notice. It asserts that "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." This is ordinarily taken as spoken by our Lord to Nicodemus; but we believe that a careful study and exegesis of the context, as well as the text, will clearly indicate that this verse marks a new paragraph which was spoken by the evangelist. The fact of its beginning with the word "And," signifies nothing from a Hebrew standpoint and John wrote from that standpoint. Look at almost any chapter in Genesis and see the use of "And," it will be found that "And" frequently begins new paragraphs. Without stating all our reasons, we understand the latter phrase, "even the Son of man which is in heaven," to mean that John says that the Son of man is in heaven when he is writing. To us this verse has the same fundamental truth as in John 6:62, that the Son of man first came down and then returned to heaven.

Eph. 4:9, 10, contains the same remarkable teaching: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." The identity of the Christ,

that is, the divine-human personality, is the same in coming down from heaven and in ascending into heaven. Not only His divine nature but His divine-human nature must have pre-existed.

These considerations are strengthened by the fact of the persistence and continuance of His human nature, as well as His divine, after His return to heaven and after His glorification. At His Second Coming, which has not yet taken place, He will be identical in personality, the divine-human Jesus, for Acts 1:11 declares, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The Lord Jesus always will be the God-man. He must have pre-existed, in fact, must have always existed, not in our fallen flesh, but in a truly spiritual and potential humanity, inseparably and vitally joined to His deity. These facts do not imply, as many of the Church Fathers and others assert, that His deity became human and His humanity became deity; for His deity was absolute; His humanity was relative. The relative can never become the absolute. His deity was uncreated, His humanity of necessity was created, even tho its creation was before time. The created can never become the uncreated. Creation can never become the Creator in the absolute sense. Our Lord's humanity was always and everywhere perfectly dependent upon the Father. All other of humanity and creation have access to

and union with God only in and through Christ, because of His divine-human, eternal existence.

We will note a few more important verses. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them" (John 17:22). Christ, as God, that is, as part of the absolute God, had and has all glory, none could be given Him that He did not have; but as Son of man, He won a glory and was given a glory, and, by faith, in this wonderful prayer our Lord anticipates the work as done and the glory won. Verses 11, 12, etc., speak of "those whom Thou hast given Me," and verse 24 also tells us of a "glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

We believe that the difficulties of Phil. 2:6 can be explained only by taking into account the eternal existence of our Lord not only as God but also the eternal existence of Him as Son of man. The verse reads, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6). The latter part of this verse should be translated, "He thought it not a thing to be grasped as a robber's prize to be equal with God." The temptation to be equal with God did not belong to His deity, for that was God and there was nothing to be grasped; but in His humanity, which altho eternal, was created, and therefore, was dependent, there might have been the temptation to make His humanity equal with

God. He never even entertained the temptation. It seems that Satan, who was only a creature when he attained to greatness under the blessing of God, sinned in this kind of temptation, in striving to make himself like God. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars (angels) of God . . . I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14).

The word "being" in the expression "being in the form of God" needs attention. It is a stronger word than "being," and the phrase should be translated "*subsisting from the beginning* in the form of God."

There is also evidence from Hebrews 1:2, 3, that the Son who came on this earth in a true humanity was in the form of God; for those verses tell us that He was "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His substance" (literal).

Altho we hold the true and essential deity of our Lord, yet we believe the text Phil. 2:6, is witnessing to victory in His eternal humanity; and only on this ground yields its true meaning. Christ was and is, and will be as He was eternally, the *God-Man*.

Phil. 2:4-11 speaks of the humiliation, suffering, death and exaltation which He has as Son of man endured and through which He won the highest honors. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross," etc. (Heb. 12:2). We

can not conceive of all these words having applicability to anything but to His humanity. We, therefore, believe that He was always the God-Man, and will always remain the God-Man.

We do not think, in the "emptying" of Himself, *i.e.*, "made Himself of no reputation," that the Lord Jesus Christ ceased to be the Son of God, but that in His humiliation He did not take His deity nor the glory and eternality of His humanity, into account. Peter the Great, Tsar of all the Russias in the seventeenth century, in disguise hired himself as a laborer in their shipyards and worked at hard work three months or more. He was still Tsar of all the Russias, but for that time he did not take his Tsardom into account,—so the Lord Jesus Christ. His humanity was a real humanity, an eternally created humanity, He condescended to our fallen condition, He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He was born of a woman; He grew; "increased in wisdom and stature"; learned as any boy who trusted God would learn. In His deity, He knew everything; in His humanity He became like us. He wrought His miracles by faith; He prayed and had answers to prayer; he was dependent on the Father for words and works; He trusted the Father; He wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. As man, He was tempted, "God can not be tempted"; He withstood temptation through faith in the Word of God; He became like us in all things,

and yet, in addition to all this, He was more than humanity, for humanity is creaturely, and He received worship. He would never have done this if He had not been truly a part of the absolute Deity as well as a part of humanity. As Deity He was the "only begotten Son," as man He is the "first begotten." (See Chapter, Since God Is Love.)

There are certain things which can be explained only by recognizing the fact of the eternality of the union of our Lord's humanity and His Deity. Think it not strange that even a creaturely humanity can have eternality; but anything that is creaturely can have only a received, or a derived eternality. Only Deity can have an essential and an absolute eternality.

It may be necessary to state that we do not mean that our Lord looked like us in our fallen nature on earth, when He was in eternity. A great change was noticed in Him as man after His resurrection, and especially after His glorification. Stephen, Paul, and John saw Him, and He was more like a most glorious angel, that is, in His humanity. His Deity can not be apprehended, but by faith. What His humanity will be when He finishes the work and presents the kingdom to the Father no word has told us, but it will be transcendently great and glorious.

This truth of our Lord's eternal humanity explains the origin and dignity of man. If the hu-

manity of our Lord came down from above, then all humanity has thus descended, not, however, for the same reason and in the same manner. The angels and men that fell came down because of their sin. They lost the light and life of Christ; they died to His presence and awakened to the lower world of sense and sin.

In this time when the hypothesis of evolution is dominating most of our thinking, we need to learn that altho it uses many facts, in itself it contains but little truth. If it were all true as developed, it would contain no more than a half truth; for there never is any evolution unless there is first an equal involution. Besides this, the whole truth of man's origin as revealed in God's Word is entirely neglected. Man in his original was created in Christ's humanity, on a higher and more glorious plane than the angels. There has been a terrible degeneration, and there is need of a re-creating regeneration. Nature itself, as we know it, has fallen from what it was originally; and all its groans and travail are a working toward what it was. Of itself it will not reach the goal; the life and light of Christ must be born in it again.

Phillips Brooks, in a remarkable sermon on "The Eternal Humanity," writes:

"Christ says, 'I am eternal.' Now that must mean not merely that He has existed and shall exist for ever, but also that in the forevers of the past and the future He is eternally Christ; that the special nature in which He relates Himself to us as

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Savior never had a beginning and shall never have an end. Now what is that special nature? Christ! The word includes to our thought such a Divinity as involves the human element. Christ is the divinely human and the humanly divine . . .

There are two words: God and man. One describes pure deity, the other pure humanity. Christ is a word not identical with either, but including both . . .

"Stop here one minute and see how this exalts the human nature that we wear. In the midst of the eternity of God there bursts forth into being the new life of man. What shall we say of it? Is it just a creature of the moment which witnesses its birth? Is it just another of the world's ephemera, with a little longer space of life than some of its time brethren? Is it a new type of being made to be born and die? What if this other truth be true? What if the type of this life I live were part and parcel of the everlasting Godhead? What if it be the peculiar glory of one of the persons of that Godhead that He has worn forever, bound with His perfect deity, the perfect archetype and pattern of this humanity of mine?

"If this truth be so, then we can not but feel that there is much in it to enable us to feel rightly with regard to every one of the new theories which look to a confusion and a loss of the distinctive type of manhood. We have all had our interest excited by the apparent tendencies of modern science toward a depreciation of what has always been considered the unshared honor of humanity. Wise men come forward and tell us of a course of structural development, wherein man becomes not a new creation, for whom a new word was spoken from the creative lips, a new gesture made by the creative hand, but merely the present completion of the natural progress of lower natures working up thus far by some process of selection whose law is resident within itself. The gorilla in his generation is seen climbing through the gradations of a more and more perfect apehood, to attain the summit of his life in men. 'Man is in structure one with the brutes'. All are but co-ordinated terms of nature's great progression from the formless to the formed; from the inorganic to the organic; from blind force to conscious intellect and will'.

" . . . What am I only a higher attainment of those



poor dumb brutes, digging the earth a little deeper for the roots I am to eat, piling a little more delicately the den I am to live in, crying a little more articulately the pain or pleasure that I feel? . . . Let science show me my affinities with the lower life: a mightier hand points me to my connection with the higher. I go back beyond the first rudiments that curious hands have found, buried in the slime of formless worlds; I go back beyond the forming of the world in which man was to live, back to the beginningless Alpha of all being, and lo, in Him I find the eternal pattern after which my nature was to be fashioned, the eternal perfection which my nature was to seek."

The creation of our Lord's humanity in eternity implies that the whole creation was originally eternal, for it was all created in Him (Col. 1:16). If it were otherwise, Christ would not be complete, the eternal creation would not be complete and God's glory in eternity would not be complete.

This is further confirmed by the facts that the ruins of our fallen nature witness to a former glory that belongs to a state of things that is not temporal, and besides, the conditions of time never fully satisfy the heart of man.

In the Scriptures, John 6:62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of *man* ascend up where He was before?" we are given truth which is for all men, for the title "Son of *man*" is Christ's title as man and as man's vital Head and Representative. If He was there originally we were also there, and if He ascends there again, so will we when Christ finishes His redemptive work.

We also know that when He ascended He took

up with Him a glorified body, that is, a body made up of the gross elements of this world, glorified. All this shows that nature and creation were once spiritual and glorious, and through Christ are to be restored; for the material was a vital part of Him. Vitally united to Christ again, man and all creation will be eternally in God.

In the death, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ, all creation has potentially passed through that process; and in the ages to come it will have all wrought in it which was wrought in Him. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." And when He does so fill, every longing of His whole creation will be satisfied.

## XVIII

### SINCE GOD IS LOVE

**THE** theme of this chapter is not "If God is Love," for in that case it might be thought that there was some doubt that love is His very nature; but the theme is "Since God is Love," and we purpose to consider a few of the consequences that follow from this momentous fact.

When Edgerton Young, a successful missionary in Northwestern British America, taught some of the Indians to read by the simple syllabic characters, he wrote on the rock for them to read the words, "God is Love." One old Indian chief looked and pronounced the characters, and as soon as he uttered them he caught their import. He arose to his great height and said, rubbing his eyes, "Has there been sand in my eyes all these years? I have seen the Great Spirit in the lightning, I have heard Him in the thunder, but I never knew till now that 'God is Love.' " How many have really learned this truth?

We realize our insufficiency in approaching this great theme and appropriate the words to ourselves, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." We know that it is only as He draws for us, and gives us of the living water that

we can have it within us. May we trust for the water that He causes to flow from His Word and the upspringing water of life which He said "shall be in him" (John 4:14).

When we speak of God's attributes we may say, and many do, that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." This is a very blessed definition; but it largely defines only God's attributes, whereas, the text, "God is Love," tells us what He is in Himself. This text reveals His very nature. For instance, in speaking of justice, we know that God has justice as one of His attributes, but He is not justice; God is Love. This fact gives us a revelation of God's very nature.

Since God is Love, there must be personality in the Godhead; for a mere thing, energy or force can not love. Further as one of the old Church Fathers said, "Love implies the Trinity; for if God is Love, there must be a Lover and a Beloved and the Spirit of love." The Son must have equality with the Father, or He is not an adequate object for the Father's love; and the Father must be equal to the Son, or the Son does not have an adequate object to love; and the Holy Spirit must be equal to Father and Son, or He could not be the Bearer of the love of the One to the Other, and Himself be the very essence of their love-life.

The word, "person" is inadequate when refer-

ring to the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Augustine, Calvin,<sup>1</sup> and others express their regrets at having to use so imperfect and misleading a word; but it was the best-known word they had or we have. The words "subsistence" or "hypostasis" are more accurate, but are too little understood. There are three such subsistences or hypostases in the Godhead and the Three make One. There are not three Gods, but only One God. As has been well said, "Neither is God without the others, and each with the others is God, and each has a peculiarity incommunicable to the others." Here is a tree (all illustrations fall short), it has a hidden root and the manifested tree-trunk and branches, and also the sap as the spirit of life that flows from one to the other. There is but one tree, not three. God the Father is the root, the Hidden God; God the Son is the part of the tree above ground, He is the Manifest God; and the Holy Spirit is the Life that flows from one into the other and then outward. Again, God the Father may be compared to a great Love-Fire, which eternally begets the Son, who is the Light; and the Holy Spirit is the heat and chemical rays that proceed from both.

In human relations when we say "father," we mean that he was born before the son; in eternal divine relationship, the Father would not have been Father if He existed before the Son for one

<sup>1</sup> *Institutes*, I, 13:3-6.

is not a father without a child. The same principle applies also to the Holy Spirit who eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. His relationship is also eternal.

The generating power in the Godhead is this great love-desire.<sup>2</sup> In man desire generates images and thoughts. In God such generations are eternal realities. On the plane of the Divine, the Only Begotten Son is the Joyous Light, which is eternally begotten of the love-desire, and in which God sees Himself. Divine love is greater than loving on the line of equality. Divine love has condescension in it and as this generating love-desire in eternity loved and loves the Son on the creaturely plane, then the true humanity, in a spiritual form and material, is created. In His deity the Son of God is uncreated; in His humanity He was created. Christ always was and always will be the God-man. He may have different manifestations, one at one time and another at another; but He is always essentially the same.

This fact explains such texts as, the "Son of Man (note, not "Son of God") ascends up where He was before" (John 6:62). As the Son of Man, He is in the resurrection—"the first-born among many brethren," but as Son of God in deity there is no other; on the plane of Deity He is the Only Begotten Son. God, through the strong

<sup>2</sup> See William Law, *The Spirit of Love*. Vol. VIII of *The Works of, Rev. William Law, M.A.* (G. Moreton, Canterbury).

love-desire, created His humanity with all angels and men in Him, as the descendants of Adam were originally in Him; and, further, the whole spiritual creation was likewise in Him. This creation was not out of nothing, that is unthinkable. The Scripture gives light on this point in Rom. 11:36, "For out of Him, and through Him, and into Him, are all things" (literal). And again, the things which He created "were not made of things which do appear"; that is, they were created out of the invisible energies and powers which streamed forth from God. These energies and powers are called His glory; they form an eternal spiritual nature. God as a God of Love would not have had perfect satisfaction unless everything of creation was created by Him in eternity. Not one whit is ever to be added to God's glory, as God: He has it all eternally.

The doctrine of the conservation of energy, which is generally accepted at the present day, proves that nothing is truly destroyed even if consumed in fire. All of its elements remain somewhere. Things may appear in new form, but their essence was created before time began. All the light and peace and joy that was in the eternal creation was caused by the birth into it of the life and light of the Son through the working of God's love-desire. When the creation fell, what it lost was the birth and manifestation of the Son within. This fact alone explains the necessity of the Son

being the only one who could redeem. The love-light has been lost and Christ must be born into this fallen world to bring in again that love-light in all where it was lost.

This love of God in eternity, was not only a love on the plane of Deity; but also the divine love condescending and manifested on a creaturely plane: it was and is a sacrificial love. In the original creation it was God in Christ, giving His life to and for others. His foreknowledge, and His eternally knowing of the fall of angels and men; and also the fall of the nature in which they were created so that they fell and nature fell—all this drew no new thing from Him. The cross of self-sacrifice has always been in the heart of God. He has been, and is continually, giving His life to and for others, else there would have been no creation and no redemption. God in His own heart of love, in eternity, has met everything that is ever to happen in the universe; not only that, but further, on account of His infinitude of love, He has met everything that by any possibility could happen, and has infinite love and peace because of His victory in Himself.

In God's eternal nature there is nothing that can disturb. All the disturbances come in the nature that is separated from God. The expressions of God's wrath and hatred are of a piece with such statements that seem to regard Him as asleep, as when the Psalmist calls upon Him to



“awake” (Ps. 35:23); all such expressions are speaking after the manner of men. It is true, that in our fallen nature, God seems to have wrath; but the wrath is only when there is separation from Him. In the developing of a photograph the only kind of light they use in the dark room is that which enters through a red glass window. The white sunlight shines on the room, but the red glass lets no rays enter but the red rays. So our sins and self separate us from God; and, altho He is ever the same, we receive only judgment, for we do not let the full white light enter. But even here God has not forsaken man. He will make grace “much more abound” where sin abounded, and more of the divine love will be manifested than ever. Adequate judgments will punish, but they will all have God’s love-purpose in them. Guilt is real, punishment is real, but real only while time lasts. Love is more real for it is eternal.

God has a wayward sinner for a son, that wayward boy sprang originally from the heart of God after a creaturely manner. He was created out of the glory of God and was a radiant creature, more radiant than an angel; and that boy, dead in scarlet sins, is still God’s son, but he is a prodigal son. Some fathers may disown their sons, but the father of the prodigal son never said that that wayward boy of his was not his son. The Bible says that such become children of the devil;

but, nevertheless, God still has a double claim upon them: they are His by creation; and they are His by right of redemption. They are dead in trespasses and sins. They need to be saved, to be converted, regenerated. They need to repent and come home; but when they do, the sorrowing father is made glad and says, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." God is a bereaved God. It brings sorrow to our heart to think that Almighty God is bereaved of His children.

Do we believe in hell? Certainly we do; but God never made it. Man so yields to the temptations of the evil one that he, by his own doing, goes to the place prepared by the devil and his angels and prepared by man's own sinful deeds.

Is God's love greater than sin; greater than death; greater than hell; greater than Satan? The sacrificial death of His Son is not for the sins of those only who believe now; but "for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). How long will the Good Shepherd seek the lost? "*Until He find*" (Luke 15:4).

Can God do anything after we die, or is He helpless? Christ preached the Gospel to the dead, even to those who were most wicked (1 Peter 3:18-20; 1 Peter 4:6). He says that He has the keys of Hades and of death (Rev. 1:18).

The word "punished" means not only suffering for the guilt of sin, but also signifies discipline

and training for improvement. (See Chapter on A Sane and Scriptural Doctrine of Punishment.)

Will believers have any opportunity of helping the lost after death? The reason of the reference to Christ's preaching was to encourage believers to be faithful, even if they suffered and died for their testimony (1 Peter 3:17-20). For when His enemies thought that they would stop Christ's work by killing Him, they only opened another sphere for His activities, larger than any in the world. The argument is, so will "*He*" do for you. They needed this teaching, for 1 Peter was written in Nero's day of persecution and martyrdoms. Gladly would the Christians go to death, when they knew that in the life to come they were entering greater service and usefulness.

We believe that this opening of Divine Love will melt more hearts for God than any other kind of preaching. A mother may forget her child; but God says, "Yet will I not forget thee." He also says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" (Isa. 66:13). When John B. Gough, the great temperance orator, was entertained by some friends in an eastern city, the mother of the household called him aside and asked him to go to her son Edward and have a talk with him. She said that Edward had been a wayward son; in fact, had gone so far in disgracing them that the father forbade him to enter the house. She said that she had pleaded with the

father and had prevailed, and that the father had consented to permit Edward to have a room where he would never have to see him. She said, "Mr. Gough, Edward came home intoxicated a couple of days ago and is still in his room. I have been caring for him. Will you not go and have a little talk with him?" Mr. Gough said, "My dear mother, if you with all your love and patience can not do anything with him, I scarcely think that I can." With a mother's persistency she finally persuaded Mr. Gough to talk with her son. He knocked at the door and entering found Edward. Mr. Gough said, "Edward, aren't you tired of the kind of life that you are leading?" Edward said, "Yes, Mr. Gough, I am sick and tired of it." "Then why do you not quit it?" "Quit it? I can't, Mr. Gough; I am bound hand and foot with an evil habit." "Then why do you not pray, Edward?" "Pray! I don't believe in prayer; I don't believe in God; I don't believe in anything." "Oh, yes, you do, Edward," replied Mr. Gough. "You believe in something. You believe that your mother loves you." Edward replied, "I do not believe anything about it, I know she loves me." "Then, Edward," continued Mr. Gough, "you believe that there is such a good thing in this world as love, and I am going to leave you here and I want you to promise me that after I go out, you will get down on your knees and pray to *love*." "Pray to what?" said Edward, "Pray to love,

for that is the only thing that you say you believe in." After much persuasion Edward promised. He afterward said that he felt very foolish when he knelt down to pray to *love*, but he had promised, and he tried to fulfil his promise. He kneeled and cried, "Oh love, love help me"; and straightway, as if through the cleft heaven, this text sounded as a voice in his heart, "God is Love"; and, still looking up, he said, "Oh God!" and there came to him the verse that he had learned years before, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And he cried, "Oh, Christ!"—and it was done. He rushed out of his room to find his mother, and, when he did, he threw his arms around her neck and said, "Mother, I have found the Christ."

Our poor, lisping, faltering tongues can not proclaim the Gospel as we would like; but we have God's Word that is true for the present time, and for all the times of the ages. It was and is true eternally, "God is Love"; and the great practical consequence is for you and me to respond to that God and to that Love.

## XIX

### GOD'S ACCOMMODATION TO A FALLEN WORLD

THE creation was originally in Christ and in God, "For in Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, . . . all things were created through Him, and for Him" (Col. 1:16, literal). The original creation in eternity was made out of the things that proceed from God, the invisible things. The outraying glory made up the eternal nature, and the original creation was generated out of this eternal nature. We can not imagine the glories that existed then!

But sin entered, and there was a fall. We do not know how many of the original angels fell. We gather from Rev. 12:4, that at the time of the end of the age Satan will draw one third of the stars, or angels, of heaven with him. Possibly a third, or less, of the original created beings fell; and with each fell his kingdom or principality. Before this, everything was spiritual. There was no gross matter, nor anything but spiritual beings and spiritual substance in God's creation. With the fall, time began; and what we call nature, instead of remaining eternal, also

fell and became fallen and temporal. The remarkable thing about the ordinary word for the "foundation" of the world in time is that it is a word signifying "casting down"; so that the temporal foundation of the world is synonymous with the "casting down" of the world (Heb. 1:10; Eph. 1:4).

God did not forsake the world even when it was cast down because of sin; but recreated it for its new temporal and fallen conditions. His creative work stopt the fallen creation from going so far that there would be nothing in it, upon which God could work. Fallen nature still has some remnant which witnesses to its former goodness and greatness. It is like the tree of knowledge of good and evil, even that tree was not all evil. God's great love caused him to manifest Himself on this fallen plane. The absolute God without such condescension and adaptiveness would have been entirely unknown and unknowable.

God's great law of circularity<sup>1</sup> then came into special operation. All worlds and suns have circles for their pathway, and truth of every kind has also its circular orbit. Science is beginning to tell us that in the highest development of physics and mathematics the old theory of straight lines of infinite length has to be changed and modified to satisfy all the data of electro-dynamics, light, and of some of the new electrical phenomena.

<sup>1</sup> See *Popular Science Monthly* for March, 1920, page 77.

There is probably no such thing in the universe as an absolutely straight line of infinite length. There are straight lines for all practical purposes; except for these new mysterious yet natural forces that transcend our former knowledge. All straight lines will, do doubt, be found to be portions of immense circles. This law of circularity runs through all nature. It was Harvey's discovery of the fact that the flow of blood in our bodies went, as it were, in a circle that lies at the foundation of most of the science of modern medicine. He was laughed at and mocked. He suffered all kinds of detraction at first, but he lived long enough to have all this changed and to be heaped with honors.

Theology needs to be arranged according to the vast sweep of this law of circularity. Then there will be the proper place for every one of its great truths; and no generalization will be in error because too few facts have been taken into account. In place of shreds of truth and piece-meal principles, the wholeness and roundness of God's own plan will appear; truths will be held in proper perspective and proportion, and harmony will reign. In the falling from an eternal condition into a fallen, temporal condition, God permitted it to fall according to the law of circularity so that all would return to Him after self-will had been conquered by judgments and grace. We have already exprest that law in Rom. 11:36,



"For out of Him, and through Him, and (back) into Him are all things" (literal). Thus the complete circle is accomplished, and the end returns to the beginning.

We know that God is not only the God of eternal creation, but also the absolutely Eternal God; but what does He do when so much of His creation falls out of eternity? We have seen that He does not forsake His fallen creatures and works. He is called in 1 Tim. 1:17, "The King eternal"; but the literal Greek is, "The King of the Ages." He is not only the King of eternity but this verse tells us that He is the King of time. He has a plan for the ages; and He will accomplish His purpose for time as well as for eternity. When in several passages of Scripture it speaks of God "who liveth forever and ever" (Rev. 15:7, etc.), we know that the correct translation is, "who liveth for the ages of the ages," which means that during the ages that intervene between the "casting down" from the eternal creation to the return back into God in the eternity to come, God is King and God lives. The word "lives," still further shows what love did when the fall came. God began then to live His life, and manifest it in the fallen universe. This life He lived, or rather manifested, was not the absolute life of eternity, but a life accommodated to His creatures. It was the kind of spiritual life that was best suited for the time of the ages. When we live in a warm climate

we can live in a house with scores of windows and doors, with great openness to light and air. If we moved to the frigid zone, we might have to live in a house of rock or snow, with but one aperture to serve both for windows and doors, and that opened the least possible number of times. The verb that defines the kind of life that God lives is connected with the word for creature and animal; the verb is *zao*, and the noun is *zoe*. We are familiar with this word; we find the same root in the word, "zoological." This word means that, because of love, God so humbles Himself that He manifests His spiritual life on the creaturely plane to help His fallen creatures.

It also seems that the good angels, who did not fall, took upon them such spiritual bodies that they could manifest themselves in time to a fallen world. The highest angels that control the judgments recounted in the book of Revelation are called *zoa*. There were four of them joined to God's throne. They have a nature in which they can manifest themselves in this Arctic world. What love must God have so to humble Himself and create, anew for time, His unfallen ones! We believe they voluntarily yielded themselves, so that they all might become "ministering spirits . . . to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

We can understand, then, why it is that God calls *zoe*, "life," the kind of spiritual life that we

get when we trust Him, because this is the kind of spiritual life best adapted for time. This explains why in some way the word "age" is practically associated with this life; and it is called in John 3:16, and many other places, not "everlasting" or "eternal" life, but "eonian" or "age" life.

When eternity begins the ages end, and eternal life in its absolute sense begins. The age-life has the germ and first-fruits of eternal life. How glorious must real, full-orbed eternal life be, if the little sample in time is so grand!

To express the idea of the eternality of God and Christ, the verb "am" is employed. God as the absolute God, is the "I am." Another word that carries us back to eternity is the verb *huparcho*, which means subsisting from the beginning. It is translated "being" in Phil. 2:6.

With this understanding of the difference between the spiritual life in time and the spiritual life in eternity, one can easily answer the objection that seems so formidable that if sin and punishment come to an end, then the Scriptures would seem to make God and eternal life come to an end. This difficulty arises from a wrong translation in our English Bibles already pointed out.

When God is called "the King eternal" (1 Tim. 1:17), the correct translation is the King of the ages. It is easily seen that when the ages end (1 Cor. 15:24) God is no longer the King of the ages.

We also know that the words "everlasting" and "eternal" life, when rightly translated, mean life for the ages, and when the ages end the age-life is left behind and real eternal life begins. The very word for "life," *zoe*, shows that the spiritual life that we receive now is for time. There will be a grander kind of life when time ends and eternity begins.

Some one asks, "But does not absolute eternity exist in God always?" Yes, in God Himself; but the manifestation of God's life, on account of His love, is tempered and adjusted to be apprehended by us in time and in a fallen world. Otherwise we would never have a point of contact to attain to the fulness of eternal life.

Another says, "Sin must have started in eternity, if it was sin that caused 'the casting down of the world.' " This is a little difficult to explain, but easy when once apprehended. If evil existed in the eternity of the past, it would be difficult to prove that it would not exist in the eternity that awaits us; but it did not exist in the eternity past. It required a separation from God and from the eternal nature to commit one sin. Let us suppose that silence stands for eternity, and sound, for time. As soon as we speak we are not in silence, but in sound; and, hence, by this comparison, out of eternity into time. So, when sin began it was no longer eternity.

All the purpose of God was made in eternity

before time began. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages" (2 Tim. 1:9, literal). The purpose of God antedates the times of the ages (Titus 1:2). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that can not lie, promised before the world began." Let us make a literal translation of Titus 1:1, 2: "Paul, a slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of the chosen ones of God, and a full knowledge of the truth which is according to a right worship, founded upon the hope of age-life, which God, who can not lie, promised before the times of the ages." Here we have the promise of God made before time. "Even as He chose us in Him before the casting down of the world" (Eph. 1:4, literal). Here we have His choice before the casting down of the world, that is, before time began.

Divine Love was not surprized, but had His whole plan made for the ages, "according to a plan of the ages which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11, literal). God's plan will never miscarry. Where sin abounded, grace will much more abound (Rom. 5:20); and the creation that was cast down, will be lifted up and made anew. Time conditions will be overruled for good (Rom. 8:28). God will again be "all in all"

and there will never again be any sin or suffering in all His domain.

God so accommodates and adjusts His truth that it is given at the most fitting season. "Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in its own fitting seasons" (1 Tim. 2:6, literal).

## XX

### THE UNSELFISHNESS OF GOD

AN erroneous idea of the Christian's God is abroad and has been abroad from time immemorial.

It rarely enters into the head or heart of man that we have a humble, unselfish God.

Humility and unselfishness are so little associated with strength that it is hard to believe that they are among the prime attributes of the true God.

Not only the enemies of Christianity but Christians themselves, have been the propagators of many false conceptions of our God.

When we teach that God wants us always to put Him first and do everything to His glory, the natural conception would be that of an inconsiderate, lofty, earthly monarch, one who desired the best for himself and cared not how his subjects fared.

What is the true statement of the case? What is God's glory? God's glory is the outraying of Himself and His gifts, which is the giving of Himself. He bids us depend upon and trust Him, in order that He may be able to support and help us. He bids us put Him first, in order that

He may give us more, and be more to us than ever. He is not satisfied with anything but our love, our very selves; because in that way alone can He give us Himself. His ideal for us is, "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine"; but we fail to enjoy His wealth, and are often like the elder brother in the parable of Luke 15. He stoops to us, He serves us. The earthly life of humble service and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a true picture of our Great God. For Christ was "the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His substance" (Heb. 1:3, literal).

We believe in the true substitutional sacrifice and atonement of our blessed Lord; but when it is presented as if Christ had to pay the price of His own life, to win God over and to get Him propitiated, it is a wrong conception of our God and of the work on the cross. For "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). It was God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." Let no one present Christ as loving and the Father as cruel. The Son was but expressing in all His suffering and sacrifice the unselfish love of our God. When we realize that and desire to understand God, we look unto Jesus. "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that



hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:8, 9). Again, in John 1:18, the same truth is clearly set forth: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him (made Him known)." God, in the person of His Son, not only sacrificed Himself for us on the cross, but He is always giving and sacrificing Himself for us. We have a God who is on the giving hand.

If God had been selfish, He never would have created intelligent beings in His own image. He did this in order that He might give Himself and His vast resources to them.

In providence, God is following us to help us. He always does the best for us under the circumstances. We, by our self-will and unyieldedness, block His unstinted generosity toward us.

In salvation, His same grace is manifested. Grace always says, "Not according to your deserts." Law says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God's love always works counter to the enemy. In the parable of the tares, the enemy sowed tares among the good wheat. God's unselfishness always sows some good in the midst of our sin; and when we inquire, "How has this come to pass?" we will hear, "A friend hath done this," our unselfish God.

In the hymn of praise to love in 1 Cor. 13, we have a description of our God in His nature and character. He does not ask us to be anything, or

to do anything that He is not and does not do Himself.

“Charity suffers long and is kind;  
 Charity envieth not;  
 Charity vaunteth not itself,  
 Is not puffed up,  
 Doth not behave itself unseemly,  
 Seeketh not her own,  
 Is not provoked,  
 Thinketh no evil;  
 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but  
 Rejoiceth in the truth;  
 Beareth all things,  
 Believeth all things,  
 Hopeth all things,  
 Endureth all things.  
 Charity never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

If there is anything in the Scriptures that seems to convey a different message, or a different spirit from this unselfish love, its cause lies not in God but in the creature.

Had man and the creation remained in the state and nature in which God originally created them, there would be nothing in this world but harmony, peace, and love; but God’s creatures fell out of the estate of glory in which they were created, and their fall brought about another nature—gross, bestial, with just enough of the ruins of good in it to keep it from total corruption and

destruction. Nature has become the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not only evil. God always deals with man or angel according to the laws that govern the nature in which that man or angel has his being. In the unfallen state, God dealt according to the laws of an unfallen and eternal nature. In a fallen state, He deals according to the law of a fallen and temporal nature. Morally, God can not deal in any other way, because every creature is circumscribed and determined by the laws of its own nature. In the fallen nature there is the clash of discord and the suffering of separation from God. The very approach of the light gives us pain. Every day that Divine Love tries to bless us there is judgment and conviction. There is a sense in which all this may be attributed to God, in that He is the exciting cause; but its real cause is in our own sin and waywardness from God and His nature.

All the punishment, suffering, and discipline that comes to us in this life arises from the nature we have that is sinful and corrupt; but it might have some sort of peace, if God's warmth and sunshine did not make it ferment. Thus God will turn corruption into incorruption, and bring life out of death. In nothing more than in this is His unselfishness manifested.

One might say, "Why not leave corruptible things alone?" The answer is plain, God causes the fermentation of corrupt nature to produce

purity. He does not contradict, nor remove the laws of nature. Metaphorically, He turns her own guns on herself. Her own laws by God's own hand, work for the destruction of her evil and toward a new creation. He nullifies death with death. All they did in the crucifixion of Christ was to slay the body that belongs to this fallen environment; and God had His opportunity to raise up an unfallen, new creation in the Person of His risen, glorified Christ. The whole creation potentially died with Him, and a new creation rose with Him and was glorified in Him. He is the first fruits of a new creation. Its completion is absolutely certain; God's purpose waits for the faith of the creature, which He foresaw from eternity.

The unselfish love of God toils and suffers to bring us back to a glory more glorious than that which was spoiled. Through the gross medium of our fallen nature, the Person and work of our God may look distorted and cruel; but to the anointed eye there is nothing but love and unselfishness. His voice of approbation and blessing sounds to the diseased ear as the thunder of judgment. When God so spake there were some who said it thundered (John 12:29).

Hannah Whitall Smith, the author of *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, introduces her autobiography thus:

"On the fly-leaf of my Bible, I find the following words taken

from I know not where: "This generation has rediscovered the unselfishness of God".

"If I were called upon to state in one sentence the sum and substance of my religious experience, it is this sentence I would choose. And no words could express my thankfulness for having been born into a generation when this discovery has been comparatively easy.

"If I am not mistaken, the generation before mine knew very little of the unselfishness of God; and, even of my own generation, there are I fear many good and earnest Christians who do not know it yet. Without putting it into such words as to shock themselves or others, many Christians . . . look upon God as one of the most selfish, self-absorbed Beings in the universe, far more selfish than they could think it right to be themselves—intent only upon His own honor and glory, looking out continually that His own rights are never trampled on; and so absorbed in thoughts of Himself and of His own righteousness, as to have no love or pity to spare for the poor sinners who have offended Him.<sup>1</sup>

"I grew up believing that God was like this. I have discovered that He is exactly the opposite."

The author of *The Anatomy of Truth* adds his testimony:<sup>2</sup>

"'God is Love'. We say and re-say these words until we have lost almost all sense of their proportion and their meaning. We have grown so accustomed to the sound of the formula that it has ceased to impress upon us one thousandth part of what it contains. And in spite of the protest which the words import, we still secretly, in our heart of hearts, regard God as a kind of all-powerful Autocrat, Who governs the world and the universe, no doubt not without the welfare of His creatures, yet still with a purpose which is primarily directed to His own

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hannah Whitall Smith's, *A Spiritual Autobiography*, named in the earlier editions, *The Unselfishness of God* (Fleming H. Revell Co., New York).

<sup>2</sup> See notice of this author and book in note in chapter, *Eternity Is Not Time*.

gratification, and on principles which are mainly self-centered if not actually selfish.

"But what a travesty of the formula does such a conception involve! What an immeasurable distance are we straying from its meaning when we suffer ourselves to think thus of God! Think for a moment what the words import. Consider what love really is. Love, the spendthrift; love, the prodigal; love, that gives all, asking nothing in return—and yet, by some mysterious law of its being, sows the seeds of gain in loss itself, reaping harvests of waste from its own lavish waste, and garnering stores of profit out of its very profusion. Of its boundless extravagance love takes no reckoning, With a perverse economy love 'seeketh not its own.' Love keeps no profit and loss account. Love strikes no balance between mine and thine. For to love, all things are loss. And to love all loss is gain.

"But if this be so, then it is obvious that we must totally reconstruct the very basis of our conception of God. We must look upon Him now as the Supreme Altruist, Who has never known a selfish thought, and Whose whole existence is one vast expenditure—an outpouring of Himself in passionate self-sacrifice, for the welfare and happiness of His children. More than a father's affection, more than a mother's self-forgetting devotion, more than a lover's love—more a thousandfold than all these is the love of God, 'which passeth knowledge,' and which sets no bounds to its bounty save only those which our limitations supply. It was no empty figure of speech which declared 'all things are yours'."

We add a suggestive prayer of Dr. Matheson:

"Lord let not the sun go down upon my wrath! Life is too short for quarrels. Yet it is not because life is short that I would have peace. It is because eternity is long. How strange my old quarrels look in the light of vanished years! Methinks they will look stranger still in the light of Thine eternity. I am ambitious now, and I shall be ambitious then; but the things for which I am ambitious now are not the things for which I shall be ambitious then. Now I strive to get; then I shall strive to give. Now I seek possession; then I shall try to be dis-

possess. Now I covet the uppermost seat; then I shall descend the stair. Now I select the best robe; then I shall choose the servant's form. I see Paul and Barnabas standing before Thy presence and there is still a strife between them. But the cause of strife is changed—Paul wishes Barnabas to be first, and Barnabas is eager to remain second; they wonder at their old quarrel in the light of Thy throne. Reveal that light to me, O Lord! In my hour of quarrel, in the hour when I strive to be first, give me a glimpse of the soul's last judgment on itself—its reversed judgment! Let me see Cain rejoicing over the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice! Let me see Lot repudiating the richer share! Let me see Sarah making a home for Ishmael! Let me see Jacob refusing his brother's birthright! Let me see Joseph exalting his brethren in his dreams! Let me see David take Uriah's place in the battle! Let me see Jonah intent on sparing Nineveh! Let me see Herod exulting in the sustenance of the babes of Bethlehem! Then shall the light of eternity arrest the strife of time.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Representative Men of the New Testament*, by George Matheson, D.D., page 259 (A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York).

## XXI

### HAS GOD A PURPOSE IN DEATH?

THE only way any of us ever enters life is by a birth. Creation is also nothing more nor less than a generation. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created" (Gen. 2:4).

The only way we ever leave life is by a death. These two processes always go hand in hand. We die to one form of life and live to another. "Except a corn of wheat . . . die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

In the Old Testament, especially in God's dealing with Israel, the sanctions or punishments referred to belonged, largely, to this life. This world was to be for them the place of reward, and the death threatened was in reference to this earthly life; but there were just enough other references and inferences of another life to prepare the way for the clearer and higher unfoldings of the New Testament. It is with the New Testament truth therefore that we will have most to do.

Death is always transition. Take physical death or the death of the body, "Absent from the body, . . . present with the Lord." Take spiritual



death: it is leaving the realm of light and entering the realm of darkness; leaving the realm of love and unselfishness and entering the realm of alienation, self-will and selfishness; leaving the realm of harmony with the divine will and entering the realm of discord with the divine will; leaving the spiritual and entering the realm of the worldly and grossly material.

Death never means annihilation; there is no such thing anywhere as absolute annihilation. We sympathize with our Annihilationist friends in their effort to get rid of the blot on God's name; but the Scripture has a better way than theirs.

Death does not mean life in endless torment. For death is always a transition; and there is no such thing as endless time. The phrase is self-contradictory; for time always carries with it the idea of temporary and besides there can not be an endless temporary anything. (See chapter on Eternity Not Time.)

We read; "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6). That is, a death has taken place in reference to the spiritual and serious realm of life, and she is alive on a worldly and natural plane. The reckoning of one's self "dead indeed to sin" is in order to be "alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11).

There was a real death that took place in our first parents on the day they sinned, *viz.*, a spiritual death. They died to the spiritual, and

they became alive on a new and lower plane. This spiritual death affected their whole being. Before they sinned they were glorious like the angels; but they died to that glorious state, lost their body of glory, and knew that they were naked. The death of the gross physical body they had acquired did not follow till years afterward. There are two distinct stages in their death; the spiritual and the physical. The spiritual death brought them to a natural plane; and the physical death to the natural brought them to a more spiritual plane, if not the ultimate spiritual, at least one that was on the way back to the spiritual. It is only as the plant is dying that it brings forth the seed of another life.

Death came in as an enemy. God makes death overcome itself and bring forth life. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, conquering life. It is by Christ's death that all death is thus overcome. God limits the influence of every enemy; and when the round is complete, He makes everything work good.

Because man died to the state in which he was originally created by a sort of a twofold death, the only way back is by a twofold death; and both of these deaths have been potentially wrought for us by Christ's death on the cross. The first is a death to the outward, the material and natural of this earthly, worldly plane, "the cross of our

Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). The second death is also potentially provided for in Christ's death on the cross, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6). Our old selfish self in its essence died with Him on the cross.

What has been wrought for us in Christ has to be accepted by faith as a fact; but the working of it within us is a process, and a tremendous one.

When we take our stand of faith for the forgiveness of sins, for the crucifixion of our self-life, for the fulness of the Holy Spirit—then alone is salvation truly begun in us. Many are tempted to think that they then have all that God has for them; but this principle of death is in order to life, and the life is in order to death on that plane that they may live on a higher and a higher plane, in which progress they will keep on not only in this life but also in the ages. It has taken the rubies and the diamonds ages to grow, is God's plan for a soul any less complex and glorious? The higher the type of being, usually the longer it takes for development. The Apostle Paul, many years after his conversion and sanctification cries out; "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3:10). The Apostle Paul is still breathing that prayer, for the special resurrection that he longed for has

not yet been fulfilled; and when it is come, then it will be the power for further progress. As long as time lasts, this wondrous process will continue. The vistas of the ages before us hold for us more love and grace and heights and depths and progress than we have ever imagined. "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). As long as the ages, that is, time lasts, there will be this temporal progress.

What will happen when eternity comes at the end of the ages and God is "all in all?" The creature has no essential eternity in himself, for the creature's eternity is always derived and imparted from God in Christ. The word "progress" is not proper for eternity; but God will have something else then which will transcend progress. We will never lose our identity and personality; and we make up the body of Christ and the body of God. We will then surpass angelic beings. All spiritual beings will have transcendent natures in God; and as they are God's body, so all nature now redeemed and spiritual will be their body. "Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23). "That God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). There will be no more death, no more sin, no more judgment, no more punishment in all God's domain; and all domains will be God's and Christ's, and we will be Christ's

in God, and God will be everything in every one.

Death and sin and judgment and punishment were terrible evils. They wrought woful havoc; they shattered God's universe and broke His great heart; but omnipotent love is quenchless and has prevailed; the freedom that was given to the creature has been respected; and every evil has been made to bring forth good (Rom. 8:28); every sin has found a deeper love in God; every pain has been a birth-pang; every judgment has been "unto victory"; the ages of training and endurance have put a set to character. True permanence of character comes only after all the tests of all the ages, but it comes then to abide. Then there will be no more fall, no more sin, no more death! God made these things work His purpose. The whole span of all the Ages will be but as a moment, as we look back at it. Eternity is here. It was only a discordant note in an eternal symphony; now it is corrected, mellowed, and entrenched and held by God in His perfected harmony.

Welcome the cross and its death and hold fast to its whole process. There is no other way than the way of Christ. There is no other process than this to bring man, not only to what he was originally, but also to the place God intended him to be. There is no escape for any one. There is no such thing as "chance." Every refusal makes the way longer and harder. There is no escape, no lesson can be skipt. Man has sinned and slipt thou-

sands and millions of times; he will have to retrace every false step. The path of progress is just the reverse of the path of the fall. It is death in order to life, and life in order to deeper deaths, ever to higher planes. The path does not stop when the starting-place has been reached, but moves on and on into "all the fulness of God."

God willeth not the death of a sinner. If one sinner die eternally, God is defeated. God can not be defeated. "God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4, literal). But it is not in the feeble, germinal, and initial sense in which we understand the word "saved" to mean that God willeth all men to be saved; but God wills all to come also to the *full knowledge* of the truth, and that implies the whole process of Christ for every man. In speaking of the elect, who are the first ones to ripen in this harvest, "a kind of first-fruits," God in the Word says, "Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). At the end of the ages all men will have reached that goal, for He wills for them the same full knowledge. It is only as the truth becomes a part of yourselves that you really know; and when you have the fulness of the truth of Christ, then you have reached the stature of the fulness of Christ. This is a result unthinkable apart from God's own

Word (Eph. 4:13). "But faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). For God is the only One who can take us through.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ." Eternity has come, the goal is won, God is "all in all."

In view of this wondrous law of life out of death and God's tremendous plan for us, let us not say that this life is all and when it is gone, that all is gone. Neither let us say that death ends all. Read this parable which we found, said to be written by one James Buckham. It is called

#### A ROBIN'S EGG

"Only think of it—love and song,  
The passionate joy of the summer long  
Matins and vespers, Ah! how sweet,  
A nest to be in the village street,  
A redbreast flashing in happy flight,  
Life's full ecstasy and delight  
Thrilling God's minstrel through and through,  
All of them packed in this egg of blue!

"Would you believe it, holding dumb  
Lime and pigment twixt finger and thumb?  
Would you think there was love within  
Walls so brittle and cold and thin?  
Such a song as you heard last night,  
Thrilling the grove in the sunset light  
Out of the casket in which we dwell  
What may issue? Can you foretell?

"Can you say when you find outspread  
Bits of eggshell, we are dead?  
Can you think if this shell be crusht  
All that is in it is cold and hushed?  
Look once more at this bit of blue,—  
Has it no message of hope for you?"



## XXII

### THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

THE best-established fact in history is the fact of the rising again of Jesus Christ. Since the time that Jesus lived on the earth, the history of the world would have been utterly different but for that fact. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the keystone of the arch of redemption; the whole arch would fall if it were not for that keystone. It is one thing to know the fact, and quite another to know the power of the fact of His resurrection. It is one thing to know an engine, and another to know its power. Likewise, we may have read of a tornado or a typhoon; but it is quite another thing to experience its power. We know something about atoms, but how little about their power. Science seems to believe that there is enough latent power in a few pounds of atoms to blow up a continent or a world. We know, as an African proverb says, how to count the apples on an apple tree; but who can count the number of apple trees in one apple seed? Who can know the power of the Seed of the Woman, who is also the Son of God? It has fallen into the ground and died and in its upspringing, resurrection life it is lifting and recreating all worlds and suns, in fact,

the whole universe; and if there are many universes, all the universes and creatures of God.

There are those who look at the smallness of our planet in comparison with the solar system and the universe, and can not understand why God should choose such an insignificant place as our little earth (a mere speck in comparison with others) to be the place for the enacting of His great work of redemption. In fact, the inference seems to be that redemption can not be so great when the place chosen for its chief events is comparatively so insignificant. This objection arises from the failure to discern the difference between a seed plot, where the seeds are grown and cultivated, and the wide universe in which those same seeds are afterward sown. The mistake in our thought is that this world is the end and whole theater of the great redemptive activities. It is only the place for the development of the seed. Christ is the Seed, He is the wondrous Seed-Corn that fell into the ground and died and rose again; and the elect or chosen ones are the seed with Him. By analogy the Word says, "the good seed are the children of the kingdom." The whole redemptive purpose for our age is the raising and the development of the seed.

This world was probably chosen also for the same reason that our Lord was born and laid in a manger. He condescended to the lowest, that He might lift them to the highest. This world is

about the only place where beings with grossly material bodies can live with ease. Most other places in the universe, as we know it, would require beings with more spiritual bodies to endure or enjoy the natural conditions there. It is the only place in the universe where God could reach the lowest, in order to lift them to the highest. Worldliness and lack of spirituality have gotten into the Church largely because of the failure to understand this, and thereby putting the work above the worker and the seed plot above the seed. The seed plot is chosen as the best place to develop the seed, that the best seed may be sown throughout the world.

Some one has changed the figure and said something like this: "This old world is the cradle in which God is rocking the future heirs of the universe." The first-born heirs are chosen, that the others may be made beneficiaries and blessed through them; then all will share alike in God's domain. They are blessed to be made a blessing, and not for any personal or selfish reason. Everything was originally created in Christ and for Him; and the universe was more like a living body than a thing. The spiritual beings that composed it were living atoms, each a little world in itself, but all together making a glorious spiritual universe. Matter was spiritual matter then and plants and trees and animals were more like the uttered unfallen, spiritual thoughts which were

creations of God in union with Him. The creation existed before it was gross and earthly, "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth" (Gen. 2: 5), but it was far more spiritual.

Originally, matter, even tho it was matter, was spiritual matter. An atom of uranium<sup>1</sup> is one of the most spiritual forms of matter and is intensely active, a little universe in itself. After it has shot forth four of its particles, it falls and becomes radium. Again after five explosions, this new atom of radium falls and assumes something of the same character as an atom of lead, gross, heavy lead. Thus through sin has matter fallen. The resurrection power of Christ will take it all back to radium, back to uranium (this, of course, is a figure), and back to the likeness of the transfigured, glorified body of Christ and of God.

When sin entered, it touched only a part of this great body of God; but a part of a body can not be sick without affecting the whole. God then, to keep the infection from spreading, brought about an earthly creation, which blocked and hindered the spread of sin. The angels who had not fallen were adapted, by His creative power, to the disturbed and grossly tempered condition of things. God Himself, as far as creation could know Him, adapted Himself so that He could help the fallen. The undermost point was reached when Christ

<sup>1</sup> E. F. Richards in *Popular Science Monthly* for May 1920, page 27. Also *The New Knowledge*, by Robert Kennedy Duncan, F.C.S., pages 129-178 (A. S. Barnes & Co., New York).

“was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” and then died. But because He died He will not abide “alone.” Christ was the real Head of man (1 Cor. 11:3). Adam was only a typical head (Rom. 5:14). Christ was also the Head of everything, angels and all creation (Col. 1:16; 2:10).

His death, resurrection and ascension lifts the whole creation up to God and places it all, not only where it was before any fall, but also where God intended it to be. In Eph. 1:18-23, Paul prays; “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, . . . And what is the exceeding greatness of His power. . . . Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all,” etc. In His resurrection not only all men and angels and all life, but even gross matter, have been glorified, perfected and restored to the highest favor of God. We take the phrase, “at His own right hand,” to signify the place of highest favor and power. The glorified God-man, with a true material body glorified, is at God’s right hand. This opens to us something of the meaning of the power of His resurrection.

It is unfortunate that the word, “resurrection,” is given as the translation of the Greek word, “anastasis.” The word “resurrection” with its beginning *re* signifies “to rise back again to what one was when he died.” The Greek word is the

one in the Scripture written by the Apostle. Its ending signifies process. We use the Latin-derived word "resurrection" usually for but one thing; *viz.*, the dead coming up out of their graves; whereas the word in the original Greek means the whole process of rising up and advancing until the highest heavens are reached. It is so understood in the passage already quoted in Eph. 1:18-20. The resurrection process begins as soon as we become Christians, even in this life we receive the earnest of our glorified body (2 Cor. 5:5). When we die, the resurrection process continues for the Christian, and blessed activity may follow as it did with Jesus. He was "quickened in spirit" after He was "put to death in the flesh," and through this resurrection power He preached (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6). When He arose from the sepulchre it was still part of the process; and when He ascended, it was still by the same power; and as a man, He is still advancing.

The work of our Lord was potentially finished on the cross, but the resurrection process will continue till the end of the ages. We do not wonder that the Apostle prayed that he might "know" Christ and "the power of His resurrection," and that he might be of those who enjoyed an exceptional resurrection; for even when he does thus rise, it will be only a stage further in the whole process. He will enjoy the elect resurrection, that he may go on and in its power help others to

a similar place. The elect of honor are the elect for responsibility and service.

As far as we understand "the power of the resurrection," it is *the power of advancing*. Were it not for the work and resurrection of Christ, there would be no such progress; but the Scriptures teach that there is a rising again not only of the just but also of the unjust. This would not and could not be, only for the power of His resurrection; it is of grace and is of His working. This explains the words of the Apostle Paul in Acts 24:15, "And have hope toward God. . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." According to the ordinary view it would seem strange that he would say that he has "hope toward God" for a resurrection of the unjust as well as the just, because for the unjust it would be a horror and not a hope. It all becomes plain when we read the idea of process and advancement, which is the real meaning of the word in the original. Neither does it change the thought when we read that there is a resurrection of judgment (not damnation; John 5:29). In fact, the word translated "damnation," as we have seen in a previous chapter, is the word meaning, not judgment, but literally "a judging." This word also indicates a process or a series of judgments. This harmonizes with the Judgment of the Great White Throne, which takes place at the conclusion of the Millennium. "And I saw a

great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20: 11-15).

From this last verse we gather that only those whose names were not written in the book of life were "cast into the lake of fire"; and the implication is that probably many who were resurrected and brought before the throne were saved; the punishment of such would be ended. Their punishment in part had been to be shut out from the millennial blessing for a thousand years or more. The unrepentant are cast into the lake of fire. They are resurrected, *i.e.*, advanced to severer discipline and punishment; but note, it is an advancement, for this lake of fire, as we have shown in its chapter, is the place of Divine purification. They are punished there for the "ages of the ages," *viz.*,



for the latter part of the millennial age and for the great final age, "the Age of the Ages." The Bible counts a part of a year or age as one age, according to the Hebrew idiom. They reckoned a child two years old if it had lived only a year and a day. We can not conceive of God, in the first instance, creating beings whom He foresaw would be in torment forever and ever; and still further, it is unthinkable also to imagine God's resurrecting them in order that He might endlessly punish them. If punishment is not only for guilt, but also for purification, then we can understand; and besides, by its original meaning, resurrection is always a progress and advancing.

"Some through the water;  
Some through the flood;  
Some through the fire;  
But all by the blood."

Many think that when the Lord comes and we are resurrected, then there is no more advancement. Among those who are resurrected as soon as the Lord comes, we read that there is a difference in glory and perfection. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41, 42). God will not be satisfied to have one of His children greater than another. He will not have to make

them all exactly alike, but they will all have an equal share of His resurrection life and glory worked into them. The process of the resurrection will continue to the end of the ages. It is of this resurrection power that it is said, "According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The ages last till the Lord's resurrection embraces and fills all in every part (Eph. 1:23). And then the Son will hand over the perfected kingdom to the Father, and God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) will be "all in all."

There are many who think that nothing can be done for a resurrected sinner; but they have not noticed that the greatest work and application of the redemption and resurrection life in Christ, is to be made in the final and greatest age of all. In other ages the work is only elective and partial; in the age of the ages it is all-inclusive. In Ephesians, the first chapter, we have the blessing on the elect (Eph. 1:3-9). Then in verse 10, we have revealed the mystery of His will for all, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might head up all things in Christ" (literal). This heading up in Christ comes after the Second Coming of Christ and after the resurrection and the Millennium.

The thought generally held is that some become so hardened that they will not take the offer of salvation when given to them; but if it be true, as

is usually believed by evangelical Christians, that whenever a sinner is saved, he is saved only by the grace of God, then the whole question resolves itself into God's ability to save. Lazarus is dead. It matters little to God whether it is four days or four thousand years. Lazarus is not to be raised by his own ability. Is God who created unable to re-create? There is always creative power in the Word of God. It is really not a question of how long or how dead one is; it is a question of God's power—of the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nothing is too hard for God. The dead will hear His voice. The harder the case and conditions, the greater the victory for God. God has said that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He would head up *all* in Christ, and it shall be even as He said.

## XXIII

### FINAL PERMANENCE OF CHARACTER

ONE of the bulwarks of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment is the argument from what is called the final permanence of character in this life. This is supported by analogy, by philosophy, and by the quotation of texts of Scripture.

As far as Scripture is concerned in both its letter and rationale, there is no such thing as final permanence of character till the end of the ages; while time lasts everything is in flux and flow. the most permanent things are evanescent and transitory. We call the rocks permanent. How grandly they have stood for thousands of years! They are relatively permanent, but only relatively. Every one of them is slowly disintegrating and wearing away. One day they are to receive their baptism of fire, and they and everything else are to be made over again. At the conclusion of the age of the New Heavens and New Earth (the Age of the Ages), all things physical and spiritual will have received their full and final permanence, when God becomes "all in all."

All the arguments of final permanence of character follow the same analogy as that of nature. In time there may seem to be permanence, but it is only relatively permanent. Final permanence is reached only at the end of time.

One may become so hardened in this age that the only thing left for him is to be delivered over to Satan, which often means death and discipline. The purpose, we are told, is to be finally helpful, that he, the sinner, "may learn not to blaspheme," or that his "spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 5:5).

We have considered the texts that refer to unpardonable sins (Chapter XV). We discovered that there are such sins, and that the most heinous of them is the sin "against the Holy Ghost," of which the Word says, "it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come"; but the final great age of reconciliation follows "the age to come." The Word says in that age all things are to be brought again into Christ (Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:10, 11, etc.).

In smelting ore that contains precious metal, one smelter often has his limitations. He can separate the metal from its dross, but can do little toward removing the alloys that it may contain. To accomplish this last, a new process needs to be applied, and frequently the metal has to be sent to a distant place to be purified. Man is by analogy doing with refractory ores and metals only what God, on a large and perfect scale, is doing with His creatures. Man may fail in some of his mechanical and chemical processes, but God never.

God is the greatest economist. Nothing is ever

really lost or destroyed in His universe. His highest glory is to utilize all waste material and make out of it vessels of supreme honor.

We have not the slightest doubt that if God had not interfered, His creatures would have sunk into utter waste and uselessness. But He did, and He does interfere. God has put bounds to evil just as He has done to the sea. For the sea He "set bars and doors, And said Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." So great is His power that He can hold the sea with a rope of sand: "Which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it can not pass it: and tho the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; tho they roar, yet can they not pass over it" (Jer. 5:22).

More surely than of the sea has God set the boundaries of Satan and sin. He says through the Psalmist: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psa. 76:10). Evil is restrained and kept within bounds. Self-will has its limitations. Satan is far from being omnipotent, God alone is over all. "For we know that God worketh all things together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28, margin, R. V.). Among the "all things" are found evil and sin. According to this word, we know that He makes even sin work together for good. This could not be true if thou-

sands and millions and billions of souls were left in hell throughout all eternity. Such an outcome of God's creative and redemptive work would be a horror and a real hell to a God of Love. What father or mother could say that all things have worked together for good, if a beloved son or daughter were left in hell for eternity? If the ordinary theory prevails, Satan is greater than God; for taking all the world together and considering it for all time, it would seem that he would have more souls than God. How are all things made "to work together for good" to the missionaries and earnest praying Christians, if the majority of the heathen of our time and of all time are lost forever? (We doubt not that multitudes are lost for this age and maybe for that which is to come, but not for eternity.) How does that work together for good if final permanence is reached in this life? If final permanence is reached in this age, what about the millions and billions of infants and little children who have died without any opportunity of even being fully developed? They certainly are far from final permanence of character. It is unthinkable that they are to be left without any moral character at all; for they never reached the years of discretion in this life, and never had an opportunity of rejecting or accepting the offer of salvation.

Also, if permanence is reached now, what is the object in having two other ages of salvation and

development (Eph. 2:7)? Where is the justice in giving one man an opportunity of being saved after Jesus comes, who was too wicked to let live in our age, and at the same time assure his friends of his salvation in another age, and yet not do the same for others (1 Cor. 5:5)?

"To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

The Sodomites were wicked enough, they are "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (not eternal, but age-abiding). Our Lord intimates that it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for certain cities of His time that rejected His messengers (Mark 6:11). God promises Israel's restoration (Ezek. 16:62), and at the same time tells them that their sins have been more abominable than either Sodom or Samaria (Ezek. 16:49-52). He therefore promises both Sodom and Samaria to bring again their captivity and restore them to their former estate (Ezek. 16:53, 55).

Assyria has been destroyed as a punishment of their sins (Zeph. 2:13). "Its ruins have been make a gazingstock" (Nah. 3:6). But God has purposed a great blessing for Assyria in the time of Israel's restoration. We read in Isa. 19:23, 24, "In that day shall Israel be the third with . . . Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land."

Notice the words of the Lord against Moab and Ammon: "Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of



hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation" (Zeph. 2:9). This judgment would seem to be final, but it is final only till the judgment is completed. For God says of Moab in Jer. 48:47, "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days"; and in Jer. 49:6, of Ammon He promises, "And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord." If one reads only a portion of God's Word, the facts are too few to calculate rightly the curve of God's purposes. All the texts must be examined, that a complete induction may be made.

We can find abundant illustration of this same principle in the history of God's ancient people. In place of permanence in judgment and evil, the words are relative and temporary and should be so translated. Our English version often conveys a wrong conception on this point. The prophet Jeremiah, in warning Judah of their Babylonian captivity says, "And thou, even thyself, shall discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn forever" (Jer. 17:4). This last word "forever" is a relative word, and does not signify final permanence. It means that judgment will continue till it accom-

plishes its purpose. In this particular case it lasted seventy years, the time of their captivity.

Likewise in Jer. 17:27, "But if ye will not harken unto Me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." This had its fulfilment in Nebuchadnezzar's overthrowing and burning Jerusalem. It was not quenched till the judgment was accomplished. But Jerusalem was built again, destroyed again and rebuilt since that time. There still awaits another overthrow by the antichrist, and then will come the restoration for Israel's glorious millennial kingdom. In all these seemingly final and permanent states, we have only relativity, not absoluteness; we have time that ends and not eternity. We can certainly say of all God's judgments, when the cycle is completed, "I have hoped in Thy Judgments" (Ps. 119:43).

There is one text, that on the surface, seems unanswerable in reference to Judas and that is found in Mark 14:21, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born." This text seems to teach that it would have been better if Judas had not been born. Here we would have the final permanence of Judas' character implied; but if

final permanence is granted to Judas' character, something more may be inferred that we may not be so ready to admit. Here is a work of God that, in its final outcome, would have been better not to have been; that is, it would have been better for Judas not to have been created. We could admit this conclusion for every one else but God. Man may do something which would be far better for him not to have done; but to put God in this class, certainly reflects upon His wisdom and power. God, Who sees the end from the beginning with an infinitely loving heart, would certainly not create anything which would have been better not to have been made. We are convinced that the text presents no such difficulty, and that in it there is no reflection on God's ways. The difficulty comes from a wrong translation. The latter part of the verse should read, "Good were it for Him, if that man was not born." The meaning is that it would have been better for Jesus if that man, Judas, had not been born. It certainly added to His suffering to be betrayed by one of His own disciples, but there is no word here that refers to the final destiny of Judas. This leaves Judas in the same class with other men who grievously sin.

Further, the prophetic Scripture, Ps. 69:25, is quoted in Acts 1:20 in reference to Judas' judgment, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein." This quotation has special

reference to the sin of Israel and God's judgment upon them; but before the Psalm closes it tells of final salvation coming to Israel: "For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession." There are scores of other texts that tell of the final restitution of Israel. It is not too much to hope that the same text may bring mercy not only to Israel, who sinned so grievously, but also to Judas who was included in their judgment. Judas, in part, tried to make some of the wrong right before his death, in going to the priests and returning the ill-gotten gains and confessing that he had "betrayed innocent blood." There was probably more remorse than repentance. Judas would be judged and miss the millennial kingdom and the power, rule, and possession which he so much coveted. He would suffer till the judgment accomplished its purpose; and in the final age he must be included in those who bow in homage to their king, and he must be one of those drawn to Christ, because He said, "And I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). He draws and they come; for He tells us how far He draws them, "*unto Me.*"

The question with which we first started, presents itself again, Is there such a thing as final permanence of character? In tracing the genesis of evil, we have shown (see chapter on The Problem of Evil), that evil had a temporal beginning,

that in its very nature it implies separation from God. It can have existence only in time. Eternity, in its absolute state, does not contain the ground and environment for evil to exist.

Nevertheless, the temporary permanence which we see figured forth in nature, and the longing for permanent rest and stability of character, we believe can be realized only when all the tests of all the ages have been undergone. Christ is the first-fruits, and the elect are a kind of first-fruits. The first-fruits exemplify what the full harvest is to be. They are samples of what all will be when we all come to the full measure of the stature of our Lord Jesus Christ; then there will be permanence of character in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and love. There will be a moral impossibility of sinning; not that one could not sin if he would, but his purpose will be set the other way. Every one will be matured. There will be no new kind of temptation. Everything will have been tried. The resources of sin and temptation will have been exhausted. There will be room for nothing but God in all human hearts. Sin will have burnt itself out. His death will have destroyed death.

Good is final. It is the only thing that can be absolutely final. Evil and wrong have no place in the absolute. Final permanence in goodness can not come till the Son hands over the Kingdom to the Father and God becomes "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

## XXIV

### THE LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN FREEDOM

**MAN** would be a mere machine, and not a moral agent, if he had no freedom of will. In fact, there could be no moral responsibility if there was no freedom of will.

There is a universal consciousness that our wills are free. This consciousness involves some of our primal intuitions; we need no argument to prove the truthfulness of our intuitions; they are a part of our very nature. If we deny them, we deny ourselves and deny axiomatic truth; and that kind of truth we know in ourselves to be true without outside proof. We do not need any one to prove to us that the whole of anything is equal to the sum of all its parts—we know it. We do not need any one to establish by argument that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, nor that every effect must have an adequate cause; neither do we need to prove that the human will is free; it is a fact of universal consciousness. In our experience we act in accordance with this fact—I will to stand or I will to sit; I will to walk or I will to ride. We have the power of originating action or of refraining from action by an act of our will.

It has been urged by some, with some show of reason, that man's decisions of will are always made according to motives, that, of necessity, we act on the strongest motives; and that the strongest motive is the one that will give us the greatest happiness. This line of reasoning would make a martyr and a murderer both act from a motive of self-love and it would reduce all life to a spirit of selfishness. We know that this is not the case.

We know also that we can choose a distant good instead of a present gratification; but, as far as impulse is concerned, it is always strongest for immediate satisfaction. This very fact of so choosing indicates the freedom of the will. Further, it is impossible to thus speak of motives in reference to their strength, for they are of so many classes and kinds. Often a weak motive is followed and a strong one rejected.

The universal intuitions of mankind witness to the freedom of the human will. Any effort to prove that our wills are not free at all can proceed only by taking for granted the truthfulness of our universal intuitions. If we doubt some of them we will be compelled to doubt all, and that would end all reasoning and would deny the foundations of the consciousness of human personality and existence.

We are not affirming that the freedom of the human will is unlimited, but rather that it has many limitations. We are specially referring to

the human will as we find it conditioned in time, and not carrying the discussion into the enlarged freedom of eternal relations, which we believe it had and will have again in eternity.

In speaking generally, we would say that we would expect limitations in the freedom of the will of any of God's creatures, by virtue of the fact of their being creatures, and, therefore, finite; finiteness always implies boundaries and limits. As we proceed we will attempt to be suggestive only and not exhaustive.

There are limitations of man's freedom in that the time, place, parentage, and environment were not chosen by him, and every one of these things limits him.

Man is limited by his physical: he could hardly choose to be an athlete if he were born with limbs that were almost useless.

Man's choice is limited by the degree of intellectual endowment that is given him. His whole outlook of life depends, among other things, upon his intellectual apprehension.

The inherited capabilities, desires, appetites, and tendencies are important factors in limiting man's freedom of choice.

The environment is also a potent factor, for his opinions are largely influenced by his companions and the spirit of his surroundings. Some are born in a moral and spiritual atmosphere; others are born in its exact opposite. There is no doubt that



God takes all these factors into account, and that one's environment is the best under the individual circumstances.

A man's own life and habits condition him, and lessen or increase his freedom of choice as the case may be. Men get into bondage by forming strong habits.

Man is the only one of God's creatures on the earth who can modify or improve his condition. The lower animals improve only under the influence or training of man.

To sum up, man is limited by what he is in himself and what is his by inheritance. Man is also limited by his environment, the forces and influences that act upon him from without.

Man is limited by his light, mental, moral, and spiritual. In every man there is always a large element of ignorance: his views are partial and prejudiced; and no two men see the same thing alike. The judgment upon man is to be proportioned to the light he has, and the light he might have had but has refused.

It was because of this element of ignorance or deficient light that our Lord prayed for His crucifiers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This prayer of our Lord did not indicate that they had no guilt. See another Scripture, "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain"; but the implication of the prayer is that they would not have done

it if they had known all. This same lack of light, we believe, clouds the sky in the commission of all sin; and, besides, causes one to mingle with the bad motive, which dominates, some other good motive often of minor importance but put by self-deception in an influential place in the sinner's mind. Many a man, in stealing, says, "I have to provide for myself and my family." The murderer in some way has mingled something that is, at least, partly good as a motive in the committing of his crime. In dealing with thousands of cases in the ordinary walks of life and also in prison, reformatory, and rescue mission work there has never seemed to be an entirely unmixed motive of evil, there always seemed to be some element of good in the complexity of motives and always an element of ignorance. They are responsible up to their light, but it is possible to pray for them, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (We have often thought that God could not twine His purposes of good with evil unless there was this element of ignorance and some little element of good in all evil. Man's first sin was mixed with good in partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.) In reference to this most heinous sin of the universe, the crucifixion of our Lord, in the same sentence in which He tells them of their guilt He also says that God was fulfilling His purpose (Acts 2:23). God always makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder

He restrains (Ps. 76: 10). Some of the great thinkers in the early Church taught that evil could not exist unless mingled with some good; for it had no power of life in itself, and it was the perversion of something good. Wrong is right wrung, or twisted; when the twist is taken out, wrong has no existence.

The human will is limited by God's providence: this would belong to the general head of environment. Some men are ready to sin, but their will is limited by not having the opportunity. Some one has said in effect, "It is bad enough to have the inclination to sin, but inclination has to have its opportunity. Pray that inclination to sin and opportunity may not come together." God often limits human freedom by what may be termed His cutting off of opportunity. We may all thank God for His preventive providences.

It is by virtue of such considerations as the foregoing that we can understand how in all of God's sinful creatures there is ground left, which is often called *nidus* or "nest," for God's working in the heart of His fallen moral creatures. If it had not been for these elements when mankind fell, there would not have been any conscience at all left in fallen man; there would not have been any sense of dependence, nor any sense of sublimity, nor desire for rest and peace nor a hunger for love. And it is because of these remainders in man that he is capable of being saved. These are the marks of

the original greatness of man, as we study the ruins. Even the great schemes of wickedness and colossal idolatry, the grossest debauchery and saturnalia, all witness that man fallen, is "majesty in ruins," a prodigal son of God.

God has said to man's self-will, "thus far and no further." Had not God limited the freedom of man's will, he might have so sinned that there would have been nothing left for God to work upon: God in His wisdom and love gave the greatest degree of freedom that His creatures could have, but He set a bound, a wall. He says in effect, "I will not let them go so far that I can not overrule it for good (Rom. 8:28); I will not let them permanently resist My will, or right would not be right and I would not be God." Finite will can not hold out forever against Infinite Will. We have often personally felt and often said to the unconverted, "If you could see Christ and His salvation as we do, no one could prevent you from accepting Him." God will keep after His lost children till He gets them to the place where they can thus see. "And I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). The limitations of the human will will give the Omnipotent will His opportunity. There is mercy and love in our very defects and limitations.

In reference to the divine will, there are those who say that God only "wishes" the salvation of all men and does not "will" it. They support

their view by the difference of opinion among Greek students as to the exact meaning of the two words for "will," one, they claim means "wish" and the other "will." The Word of God removes this difficulty for it uses both words in speaking of God's will for the salvation of all.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who willeth (*thelo*, Greek) all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3, 4, literal).

"The Lord of the promise is not slow, as some men count slowness but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing (*boulomai*, Greek) that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9, literal).

The Omnipotent "wish" and the Omnipotent "will" shall certainly prevail.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For out of Him, and through Him, and into Him, are all things: to whom be glory for the ages. Amen" (Rom. 11:33, 36, literal).

"For God (limited) or shut up together all for disobedience, so that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32, literal).

## XXV

### SPIRITISTIC TESTIMONY IRRELEVANT

BECAUSE these studies have made the future life and the state of the dead in the intermediate state more real, there may be the temptation and desire to communicate with the dead. In our day there has been a great rush in that direction. This has been intensified by the multitude of bereavements and by the nerve tension incident to the late World War, causing any kind of comfort to be sought. Many under such stress have accepted spurious or illicit comfort, when, if they had been fully themselves, they would have found comfort and rest in their God.

In addition to this, men of science have, in some instances, been the leaders in investigating spiritistic phenomena. Their special interest may be accounted for by the fact that the great bulk of their studies are so purely on a naturalistic basis that their nature cries out for something more spiritual or supernatural. When this is not satisfied in a deeper and real knowledge of God, satisfaction is sought in the spiritistic realm.

Then again the spiritistic sphere forms another field for scientific investigation. When one's whole life is spent in seeking and searching, their

habit and happiness incline toward the pushing of such investigation into all fields, especially when so many state that the spiritistic phenomena are either fraud or sleight of hand. We have no doubt that much that is connected with spiritism has been wrought by trickery; but, allowing for all that, there is still a considerable residuum which can not be thus explained.

The psychological theory goes part of the way in the explanation; viz., that these things are but the phenomena of our own subconscious or subliminal minds. We say, this theory gives only a partial answer, and is therefore not the explanation of many of the observed facts.

The Bible is very clear in its teaching; and those who acknowledge its authority are saved from many a snare and find all the light that is needed for our time in God's Word.

The seeking to communicate with the dead, or the seeking help from those who do communicate with the dead, is expressly forbidden in the Word of God. Deut. 18:10-12, "There shall not be found among you . . . a consulter with familiar spirits, . . . or a necromancer (one who deals with the dead). For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." The Word then adds that the Canaanitish nations practised the same things; for in this text, Deut. 18:12, the word is added, "And because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from

before thee." Spiritists assert that such practises were forbidden in Israel because of the character of the spirits with which they would commune. They say now that the case is different. We fail to find any such distinction in the Word of God. But Old and New Testaments unite in warning us against Spiritism.

Notice the result of the preaching of the Apostle Paul in Ephesus as recorded in Acts 19:18, 19. There were many there who practised the spiritistic and occult arts. So mighty was the preaching of the Apostle that they confest their sin, brought their books on these subjects and burned them publicly. The amount of books burned cost fifty thousand pieces of silver. Such occultism is contrary to the Word of God, and when the Word of God prevails such things are forsaken (Acts 19:19, 20).

The slave girl who brought her master great gain through her fortune-telling, had an evil spirit, a spirit of Python, and the Apostle Paul cast it out of her (Acts 16:16-18).

It may be interesting to note that the book of Colossians was written to meet the more philosophic form of Spiritism, in which greater light was promised through the invocation of angels: a practise in certain ancient and modern forms of Spiritism and Theosophy. In the book of Colossians, Christ is set forth in all His pre-eminence as the Head of angels, of all creation, and as the



Creator of all things (Col. 1:16). Why do we need to go to the lower, when we have the Highest? In Christ are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). The Apostle adds, "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18, R. V.).

Isa. 8:19, 20 (R. V.) is plain and one would think that it was written in our day: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, surely there is no morning for them."

There is no case in the whole Bible where attempted communication with the dead, even with the good dead, is spoken of with approval.

Saul's supposed communication with Samuel is often spoken of as a genuine communication with the dead. Here is an appropriate case, for even Spiritists say that we can not believe every spirit that may communicate with us, but it is a different matter when we communicate with good spirits. Saul was seeking to communicate with a good spirit; viz., that of the prophet Samuel. The Word of God is very plain in declaring that Saul did exceedingly wrong. 1 Chron. 10:13, 14, "So

Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the Word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of one that had a familiar spirit to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

Let us look at a few points in the narrative of Saul's visit to the woman of Endor who had a familiar spirit. 1 Sam. 28:7-25. The woman asked Saul, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel . . ." etc.

Notice this was not a materialization for Saul, for only the woman saw the one she called "Samuel."

There was nothing the woman said that might not have been said even by one of ordinary intelligence who was living in Israel at that time.

Saul would be suspected by any one because of his great height, "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9:2).

Likewise, it would not take much wit to describe Samuel as an old man.

It is certainly out of character for Samuel to speak as he is supposed to speak: "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" (1 Sam. 28:15). For this same Samuel when alive had said to the people and to this same Saul: "God forbid that

I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."

There are those among Christians who hold that the witch of Endor did not have power to bring Samuel back, but that God surprized her by sending the spirit of the real Samuel. If Samuel was sent back by God to bring God's message to Saul, it is rather strange language for Samuel to use.

On the other hand, those who think that the woman had the power to bring up Samuel are believing a strange thing, that a woman with a familiar spirit, or a medium, would have the power to call up at her behest any spirit of the blessed that she chose. This, to us, is unthinkable, especially when we read in the Scripture that our Lord has "the keys of Hades and of death" (Rev. 1:18). The custody of our loved ones had better be left to His loving care.

The fact that the spirit or the woman uttered any truth is not strange. The spirit feigned to be Samuel and had to fulfil that rôle.

It did not take very much beyond an ordinary intelligence to say that the Philistines were to conquer Israel, or that Saul and his sons were to be slain, because the Philistines were in great force and already dominated Israel.

As far as the Bible narrative is concerned, the woman's prophecy does not seem to have been true that Saul was to be slain on the morrow, for the next chapter tells of other events taking place

for which several days would have to be allowed.

Also the prophecy concerning the death of Saul's sons is only in part true. It seems to mean all of his sons; *viz.*, the cutting off of his whole house; but this was not the case. Some of them were cut off with him, but we find one of his sons living a long time after this (2 Sam. 2:8, 10).

This supposed calling up of Samuel, when properly investigated, is revealed as an abomination to God and one of the chief causes of Saul's losing his kingdom.

This is the only case in the whole Bible that seems to favor in the least the seeking of one with a familiar spirit; and, when fully examined, it is found to be strongly against all such things.

There is a further word that needs to be said, and that is, the cultivation of mediumship or its seeming natural possession is to be most emphatically deplored. It requires the abject laying aside of one's personality, which is our highest and most God-like characteristic, and the development of a passivity which renders us little more than "a thing," an "it." Such a yielding sins not only against God, our Creator, but also against ourselves. It throws open the door to any kind of control or impression and deprives us of free moral agency, so that we become mere tools. The sincerity of some of those who practise these things only renders Spiritism more dangerous. Our God does not ask us to render a passive obe-

dience, even to Himself. He desires that in our yieldedness we should still hold the power of choice. He desires our intelligent cooperation, else there will be no progress or true development on our part. His course of training to fit us for heavenly things is exactly the opposite to that which is necessary to become mediumistic. He develops strength of character and will; passivity degenerates into weakness. The tearing down of the vitality of the body is often one of the means to increase mediumship. Fasting and other methods to accomplish this are used. It is true that our physical bodies are a hindrance at times; but God has made them to be a blessing, and as a wall to block the too easy approach of evil spirits. When the passivity is perfect, the medium becomes a slave, harrassed like one who has a private telephone line with ten or more on the line. He is interrupted on all sides and called at all hours.

There is no question about the supernatural element in Spiritism and Theosophy. It is the same power that was back of the old idol worship and is back of all the new idol worship. The Scripture warns us in 1 Tim. 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

Most of those who claim such power make it a means of gain. Mediums who have most influ-

enced our scientific men, occasionally, when the conditions are not favorable and the spirits were not working, have been known to deceptively push the thing through themselves. Their deception is not as much an "immoral" thing for them under the circumstances as it is an "unmoral" thing. They have gone so far into passivity that they are not fully responsible.

All this displeases God. He wants to be everything to you, to train you to trust Him. This blocks Him. He can not bestow as great things upon you as He desires. You have not the faith: you follow by the path of sight in place of faith. For a present gratification you sell your opportunity. Do not seek guidance from any one but Himself. Demons will feign to be your loved ones. Our Lord came down from heaven to give us true comfort. He says, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." He is the only One who can prove it to you. He conquered death and the grave, and conquered it for you and your loved ones. They are safe in His care. He has the keys. His name is Love.

When David lost his infant son and was comforted of God, he witnessed against Spiritism. You recall the story. He fasted and prayed for God to spare his child, but no answer came, for it was not best. When David arose from the earth he washed and drest and went to the house of

the Lord, and worshipped: "then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat" (2 Sam. 12:20). The servants could not understand why he so changed. It was because he had bowed to the will of God, and a new purpose had come into his heart, *viz.*, to so live that he could "go" and be reunited to his son. These are his exact words: "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). David knew he could not bring his son back. He did not want to be deceived by any spirit claiming to be his son. He did not go to any medium with a familiar spirit, but with new courage and increased faith he said, "I shall go to him."

Let us gladly accept the faith of the Apostle: "For I am persuaded that neither *death* . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## XXVI

### CONCERNING THE SALVATION OF ANGELS AND DEMONS

It is blessed to think that probably a large proportion of angels never fell. In the book of Revelation, 12:3, 4, it is prophesied that a third of the stars of heaven will be cast to the earth, as the name "star" is an angelic name (Job 38:7), one may infer that two thirds of the angels did not fall. These are interested in redemption, and are God's special messengers in helping those who are heirs of salvation. There is no doubt that they are advancing in knowledge, in faith and fidelity. They have an eager desire to learn more of redemption (1 Peter 1:10-12), and their humility is so great that they are willing to learn and to work unseen.

All the angels were originally good, and as "God is no respecter of persons," we believe that they were all created equal; but through faith and faithfulness some became greater than others, in fact, some became exceeding great and mighty.

In Ezek. 28:12-19 the reference is not only to an earthly king, but also to Satan who inspired and possessed him. Here one can learn how great an angel Satan was.



In Isa. 14:12-15, the reference is to the earthly ruler of Babylon and also to Satan, the unseen and invisible ruler. This text gives some clue to Satan's greatness and fall. He is the greatest sinner in the universe. Sin began with him and he led multitudes astray. There is one passage of Scripture that speaks of two hundred millions of evil spirits (Rev. 9:16), and this is but a part of their great number. Satan has real personality, but he is only a creature. He and the angels and demons were created sons of God, Job 1:6; 2:1, etc., "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." In Job 38:6, 7, we read of God's laying the foundation of the earth, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Satan and his coadjutors are the great sinners in the universe. They were sons of God, now they are prodigal sons. God does not hate any of His creatures, even when they sin; He hates the sin, but not the sinner. His heart still yearns over them. The flight of time does not change God's love, Death and Hell do not alter His affection. The hosts of fallen angels are fallen sons of God. The Scripture tells us that Adam was created a son of God and that he and his descendants also fell (Luke 3:38; Gen. 3:1-6). In fact, it is difficult to see that in the original creation man and angel differed, because they are both called "sons

of God." Through sin and diverse experiences they may have different outer forms; but they must have been essentially the same, else it would not be proper to call them both "sons of God." This fact is further attested by the Word of God showing us that when man is restored and resurrected, he will be "as the angels" and "equal unto the angels" (Matt. 22:30 and Luke 20:36). The argument for the justice and fitness of Christ's having all judgment committed to Him, is founded upon the fact of His similarity of nature; *viz.*, that He is Son of man (John 5:27). The Scripture teaches in 1 Cor. 6:3 that man shall judge angels, justice demands a similarity of nature. It may seem difficult to think of man as having a nature as glorious as an angel, but this difficulty arises from looking at man as he is. It is easier to understand this when we consider what man was originally, and this can be further apprehended by what he is to be when he is fully redeemed, restored and glorified and even still further advanced.

Does God love fallen man? "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). There is no text in Scripture that tells us to hate Satan, nor any of God's creatures, no matter how fallen they are. We are to resist him, give no place to him; but we are not commanded to hate him, nor any of his company. In fact, the plain teaching

of the Word is that we should not bring any "railing accusation" against him, for even an archangel dared not do this, but had to say, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude, verse 9).

Many over-zealous Christians need to guard their speech on this line. When there is anything left in any one that is worthy of respect, no matter how sinful he is, there is something for God to work upon; God has put limits to evil in that one, and he is therefore not incapable of being saved.

There is such an abhorrence against the evil wrought by Satan that in many cases it has turned into a personal hate. It is most healthy to love righteousness and to hate iniquity; but it is not in the spirit of Christ to hate the sinner no matter how vile he is. If there is a revolt in the heart of any against these considerations, there must be something there that needs the cleansing of the precious blood and the help of His Spirit.

Again we read in God's Word that "the devils (demons) also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:19). In the trembling there is hope. They are not "past feeling." They will be hard to reach, it may take a long time. Only God has the patience, love, and power. "His grace is sufficient." The harder the case, the greater the glory.

In Acts 19:14-16 we read, "And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know;

but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, . . . and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Here are evil spirits on this occasion and in various other places of the Bible (Matt. 8:31; Luke 10:17), who acknowledged the authority of our Lord and His servants. We do not say that they were converted: they were far from that, but they fought for the authority of Christ. Their motives may not have been the highest; but we do affirm that if missionaries who were in a savage country should hear some vile man insisting upon the authority of Christ and His Name being used by those alone who had the right to use it, they who witnessed it would say that there was something in that savage upon which God could work.

In the chapter on The Limitations of Human Freedom we see that God always limits sin in the creature, so that there is a *nidus* or ground left for Him to work upon, and whatsoever He can not overrule for good, He restrains.

Satan is not yet confined to the pit nor cast into the lake of fire. He has not yet gone as far into sin as he will go, for God has always limited his activities. We are not asserting that the fires are not already kindled in his own breast, but he still is in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12); Christians know this not only by Scripture, but also by experience. In the highest and most heavenly approach to God

the believer often encounters the enemy. He is still "the accuser of our brethren." His judgment has been accomplished in Christ's death on the cross, but it has not yet been wrought out.

This leads us to ask the question, Has the death of Christ on the cross accomplished anything for angels and especially anything for fallen angels or demons? (Demons are spirits not as great as angels, and probably disembodied.) Everything on earth and also *in heaven* has been reconciled by His death on the cross (Col. 1:20). We can understand that it was through the fall of the angels that the heavens became unclean, and we have the Scripture also that He charged His angels with folly (Job. 4:18). Through the precious blood, all in the heavens as well as in the earth are to be reconciled.

Let us see what was included in the death of Christ. Man was in Christ for "the Head of every man is Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3).

Angels were also in Him, for He "is the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10). The angels and all creations were in Him. "For in Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created through Him, and for Him" (Col. 1:16, *Literal*). These words, "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," refer to the different ranks of angels.

Col. 1:19 tells us that all fulness dwells in Him. We know that besides all the fulness of God, all creation was in Him, so that when He died all creation died in Him as a seed, and when He arose all creation rose in Him. In reference to His resurrection and glorification He is called the first-born of all creation (Col. 1:15), and as a result of His death and resurrection, the whole creation is to be made anew: even those who never fell will receive a higher glory, and all those who fell, being in the seed, will be in the resultant harvest. Then shall be fulfilled that word, Phil. 2:10, 11 (literal): “In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of *things in heaven*, and things in earth, and *things under the earth*; And every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The Mosaic worship and ritual was patterned after a heavenly worship. We see the heavenly worship very clearly in the Apocalypse where there are the angelic priests ministering in the heavens. The earthly tabernacle was typically cleansed with the blood of slain animals; but Christ's blood is necessary to purify the heavens. Heb. 9:23, 24. “It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, . . . but into heaven itself.” This text

teaches that the blood of Christ purifies the heavens. Some think that because Christ did not come as an angel (Heb. 2: 16), that, therefore, there is no redemption for angels; it is necessary to remember that Christ "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Heb. 2: 9). Had He not gone as low as any man or angel could fall, He would not reach all; but passing through the highest He became the lowest that He might include all from the lowest to the highest.

All these wondrous facts help to explain the interest of angels in all the work of Christ. The good angels helped Him, and the wicked angels assaulted Him. It is in reference to the great salvation in Christ that 1 Peter 1: 10-12 records, "which things the angels desire to look into." It is because of these considerations that Eph. 3: 10 speaks, not of the ministry of angels to us, but our ministry to the angels. It reads: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." This is certainly a remarkable text, and a remarkable ministry is pointed out. This testimony and work belongs especially to the Church, the body of Christ spoken of in these later Epistles of the Apostle Paul. They, the Church, have all their blessings in the super-heavenlies (Eph. 1: 3, literal), and one of their special works is to be, and it began when Paul wrote these words, to witness to angels.

When we read that the principalities and powers spoken of in Ephesians are, for the most part, if not entirely, the evil angelic principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12), the force of this testimony of the Church becomes stronger and clearer. It is certainly not to mock these evil angels that the testimony is given, but to teach them; and no one can learn the wisdom of God as revealed in Christ without a change of heart.

When our Lord died, He descended into Hades, and had a message to the spirits which were disobedient in the days of Noah. The disobedient spirits were evidently those of both men and fallen angels' (2 Peter 2:4) who did wickedly in the days of Noah. The earth became polluted and the judgment of the flood was poured out upon them. Christ went and preached to these, 1 Peter 3:18-20; 1 Peter 4:6, tells us the purpose of the preaching of the gospel to the dead. It is, first, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh," and second, that they might "live according to God in the spirit." The purpose, therefore, was to bring them judgment in order to live "according to God in the spirit." This is certainly spiritual life. This implies repentance, and faith and a real conversion.

If what we believe is true, the sons of God of Gen. 6:4 are a fallen race of men, fallen from the angelic state; and to this agrees the Septuagint Greek Bible which was much used by our Lord and



His apostles, which calls these sons of God angels. We have in 1 Peter 3:18-20 and Gen. 6:4 the confirmation of the unity of the race of men and angels, and the power of the cross of Christ to make all "live according to God in the spirit." All this gives point to that important word in "the mystery of godliness" that He was "seen of angels," not only in Hades but on earth and in heaven.

Further, it was not only earthly rulers but also the angelic rulers that brought about the crucifixion of our Lord. In Dan. 10:20 etc., we learn that there were earthly kings of different countries, and also angelic kings over the same countries; and all of these angelic kings were fallen angels. God's purpose included in its scope, the free agency of men and angels. They all meant for evil the death of Christ; but God worked it all for good. They were ignorant, to a great degree, of the enormity of their sin and also of the blessed outcome through God's overruling. Satan is especially called "the prince of this world" (John 16:11). In 1 Cor. 2:8 we read, "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." There was evidently much ignorance on the part of evil men and the evil angels. In the typical teaching of the old dispensations, it is sins of ignorance that are provided for in their sacrifices (Lev. 4:1; Num. 15:28). How much more in the antitype, the precious blood of Christ,

is there provision for all sins of ignorance! This is not implying that there is not full punishment for sin; but it is establishing the principle that men and angels were in large part ignorant in their great sin of crucifying Christ, and, therefore, because of their ignorance, there is provision for them in the death of Christ. Our Lord had this in mind, for He saw all who were instigating and executing His crucifixion. He called it the "hour of darkness," that is, Satan's hour; but looking at all of them, men and evil angels, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). That prayer of our Lord has been in part and will be fully answered; for every prayer of His is in accord with God's will, and no prayer of His will ever go unanswered.

In this light, we can better understand Heb. 2:14, the last part of the verse, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Satan and evil men brought about the death of our Lord; and, without knowing it, they were bringing about their own overthrow. The word translated "destroy" means to render "ineffective," "to conquer." We know that men are rendered ineffective for evil and conquered by the precious blood and the love and Spirit of God in Christ. God's method of conquering is always to "overcome evil with good." He is never satisfied with a negative result. He does not end with trying and imprisoning

an enemy; He converts them into friends (2 Kings 6:21-23). "And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the band of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

Again we read 1 John 3:8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." This word for "destroy" means "to loosen," "to unbind," "to set at liberty"; also "to demolish" and "to break"; also "to declare to be lawful" and "to admit to privileges." In destroying the works of the enemy, God will do all these things. He will loosen, that He Himself may make anew. He will outlaw, that they may become His own again. The redeeming and re-creating work of Christ will continue till all the work of the enemy is abolished. The last enemy that He thus conquers will be death. He gets the victory over death by conquering the one who caused death (1 Cor. 15:26; Heb. 2:14).

In 1 Tim. 5:21 there is another word that de-

serves special notice; it is the phrase, "elect angels." Whenever in Scripture the phrase "elect" occurs in reference to men, it means the ones whom God has chosen from among the sinful and fallen for salvation in this age. Likewise the phrase, "elect angels" signifies that God's purposes for angels are entirely analogous to that of men; *viz.*, that God chooses out in this age some for salvation.

The doctrine of election has been too little understood. We need to remark again that election has been misunderstood, because it is a small part of the arc of the circle of God's great purpose of salvation. God purposes the salvation of all (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4). And in order to the accomplishment of this great purpose, He selects His first agents. When our Lord desired to give the gospel to all Israel, He chose but twelve disciples. The age in which we are is an elective age, but God is not unrighteous. He is no "respector of persons." He elects and trains a few as the best means to reach the remainder. "Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming," and these are "a kind of first-fruits" (Jas. 1:18). And "then cometh the end," the end of the ages, when the whole harvest is reaped and saved (1 Cor. 15:23, 28). In this light, in place of the doctrine of election being a stumbling-block, it becomes a help in the revelation of God's plan in the ages. "Elect angels" means nothing less than

the saving of some angels in order to the salvation of all angels ultimately, for His elections are always a first-fruit; and a first-fruit of any kind of crop is a promise of the whole harvest.

We need to look at the chapter on The Judgments of God and see that all of God's judgments are but part of the process of salvation. Man looks too closely at the judgments themselves, without seeing their grand outcome. 2 Peter 2:4 says: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. . . ." The argument in this passage is, Can you expect Him to spare guilty men? The answer is emphatically, No. We will be justified in continuing the line of reasoning thus:—If God has prepared a way of salvation for His sons who as men are on a lower plane than angels, will He not prepare a way of salvation for His sons who are on a higher plane? As soon as we read the word "judgment" in reference to angels we have hope for them, for the path of judgment is His path to convict them and to get them ready for His great salvation in Christ.

In our study on The Lake of Fire and Brimstone, which is the great final judgment for the obdurate and impenitent, we saw that fire and brimstone meant one thing, viz., that the word "brimstone" defined the character of the fire. We were

surprized to find that the word "brimstone" was the same word as "divine," and the verb derived from the same signified "to fumigate," "to purify," "to dedicate to a god." The lake of fire and brimstone is the lake of divine purification which dedicates to the living God those who have to endure such judgments. Judgments do not save any one, but they are used by God to bring one to one's self; as the prodigal son of Luke 15:17 had to be brought to his true self by suffering before he returned to his father. The salvation in Christ is not accepted now because one feels he is all right. Judgments are used to reveal our true self and our dire need. Judgment is a "John the Baptist" to prepare the way of the Lord. Divine purification keeps on for the ages of the ages. This process is called "the second death." The first death is the physical death; the second death is the death of the self-life. The lake of fire and brimstone will continue its judgments till all is accomplished that God has planned, and till in all God's universe there is no more death, for "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). When death is abolished and the new creation progresses unto completion, in all God's new creation there will be no place for any kind of hell, for all things will be made new.

We know that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and that the great work of Satan is sin, and that Christ came "to make an end of

sins" (Dan. 9:24). "The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin." "He is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). There is no such thing as eternal sin. The phrase so translated means sin for an age or for the ages. Sin will be finally and utterly put away at the end of the ages by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:26). All sin can only be put away by the conquest of Satan, the beginner and tempter to sin.

We quote the Rev. Thomas Allin:

"To this in fact it comes, that the popular view, while admitting God's power and goodness to be infinite, yet teaches that evil shall ultimately prevail—a position obviously untenable and indeed absurd. 'Order and right *can not but prevail finally in a universe under His government*'—Butler's *Analogy*. For argue as you please, refine, explain away, it continues still an insuperable difficulty, on the popular view, or any mere modification of it, that the Devil is victor, and triumphs over God and goodness. It is nothing at all to the purpose to allege, either that those who perish finally have chosen evil of their own will, or that all evil beings are shut up in chains and torment: it is the very permanence of evil in any shape: its continued presence—*no matter from what cause*—that constitutes the triumph of the Evil One. 'To suppose,' says Canon Westcott, 'that evil once introduced into the world is forever,

appears to be at variance with the essential conception of God as revealed to us'—*Hist. Faith*. I repeat that if evil be as strong as good, as enduring as God Himself, there is no escape from the conclusion that you proclaim in so teaching the triumph of the Evil One. You are proclaiming not the Catholic faith, but a dualism. You blot from the faith of Christendom its fundamental article, 'I believe in *one* God the Father *Almighty*.' What are all heresies, all errors, that have stained the Church of God, compared with this supreme heresy, this dualism, which seats evil on the throne of the universe, a power enduring as God Himself? The torments, physical and mental, of the popular Hell, awful as they are, recede into almost nothing as compared with the far more awful spectacle of God vanquished, of God trying to save but failing, and watching His children as they slowly sink beneath the endless sway of Satan; of God's Son returning, not in triumph, but in defeat; of the Cross shattered, prostrate, paralyzed.'<sup>1</sup>

Sin would not be effaced if all the angelic sons of God were not saved, for He came to make an end of sin.

The victory of Christ would not be complete with all those lost who were once His. If Satan could say to Christ, "I hold in my power one man,

<sup>1</sup> *Universalism Asserted*, by the Rev. Thomas Allin (Elliott Stock, London). This writer is strong in Patristic quotation.



angel or demon that you can not get," the victory would not be complete. "Every knee" would not bow and "every tongue" confess. The greatest victory will be when Satan himself bows the knee and confesses "that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father." And remember this has to be done "in the name," that is, in the nature of Christ. Satan and his angels were once in Christ (Col. 1:16). He will be in Christ again when he makes his great submission and confession and the cleansing blood makes him clean. There is power in the precious blood for us and for all (1 John 1:7; 1 John 2:2).

Again, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That means that every one who was in Adam died in his sin, and every one who was in Christ lives through His death and resurrection. But as Satan and all creation were in Christ (Col. 1:16); all shall, therefore, be made alive in Him.

There is nothing that so shocks the sensibilities of some people as to hint at the possibility of Satan and the evil angels being saved. This is not saying that every one in God's universe is not to reap what he sows, that every one will not receive punishment, not only adequate for the guilt of sin, but also sufficient to burn the lesson in so deeply that it can never be effaced. Satan's power has always been limited. God is overruling it now for good to them that love Him. Satan's sins are,

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in part, sins of ignorance. Our Lord can say to Satan and his angels, "But as for you, ye thought evil against Me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

## XXVII

### THE WITNESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

As overruling providence has preserved for us much of the writing and the testimony of the leaders of Christianity in the early centuries. In fact there is an unbroken line from apostolic times.

Our chief interest centers in the first four centuries:

"These centuries are especially characterized by the preponderance of the Eastern theologians. All the early influences that molded Christian thought are of the East and not of the West. The language hallowed by the New Testament continued for several centuries the language of theology. The great Councils that fix the Creed of the Church were all held in the East, and there too were the early schools of theology—the centers of Christian light and learning."

Those who used the Latin language were at first largely under the influence of the East, in fact, it was not until the time of Augustine that the Roman and Latin thought dominated. It took the influence of the spirit of an Empire imbued with militarism and cold legalism, to give any kind of prominence to the doctrine of endless torment.

In these early centuries those holding the doctrine of endless punishment were in the minority,

and no one was counted unorthodox who believed in restitution and the ultimate and complete victory of Christ. In fact, the leaders in the early Church Councils and those who were chosen to establish orthodoxy were well-known believers in the beneficent side of future punishment. This is especially true of the second great Church Council which was held to perfect the Nicene Creed: Gregory of Nyssa was the authoritative theologian of that Council and he was a declared believer in universal reconciliation. There is no word in these early statements of creed declaring in favor of endless punishment. It is passing strange that we have to wait 553 years after Christ before any attempt is made officially to condemn the doctrine of restitution, and then many of those who began to dominate Christian thought could not even read the New Testament in the original Greek.

We will now turn to the testimony of a few representatives among the early Church Fathers; we shall find that the majority did not accept the doctrine of endless punishment of the wicked.

The first one that we will mention is Irenaeus: he lived from 130 to about 200 A.D. He was Bishop of Lyons. His nearness to the apostles makes his testimony most interesting. He writes to a friend of his remembrance of Polycarp, who knew the Apostle John:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, page 568.

"I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events (inasmuch as the experiences of childhood, keeping pace with the growth of the soul, become incorporated with it): so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse—his going out, too, and his coming in—his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; and how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord."

Irenaeus did not believe that evil would last forever. In his treatise "Against Heretics," he writes in Book III, chap. 23, §6:

"Wherefore also He drove him (Adam) out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some dare to assert, but because He pitied him and desired that he should not continue always a sinner, and that the sin which surrounded him should not be immortal, and the evil interminable and irremediable."

Clement of Alexandria, 150-220 A.D., Presbyter of Alexandria, Head of Catechetical School, pupil of Panteus, and teacher of Origen was a noted and influential writer, the following is but a sample:

"The Lord is a propitiation not for our sins only but also for the whole world! Therefore He indeed saves all universally but some are converted by punishments, others by voluntary submission, thus obtaining the honor and dignity, that to Him 'every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.'

"He punishes for their good those who are punished, whether collectively or individually."

He comments on Jude, verse 5, "They perished until they turned to the Lord," and on verse 7, "By which the Lord signified that pardon had been granted, and that on being disciplined they had repented."

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, 169-181 A.D.,  
 "To Autolycus," Book 2, chap. 26:

"And God showed great kindness to man in this, that He did not suffer him to continue being in sin forever; but, as it were by a kind of banishment, cast him out of Paradise, in order that, having by punishment expiated within an appointed time the sin, and having been disciplined, he should afterward be recalled. Wherefore, also when man had been formed in this world, it is mystically written in Genesis as if he had been twice placed in Paradise; so that the one was fulfilled when he was placed there, and the second will be fulfilled after the resurrection and judgment. Nay, further just as a vessel, when on being fashioned it has some flaw, is remolded or remade, that it may become new and entire; so also it happens to man by death. For he is broken up by force, that in the resurrection he may be found whole, I mean spotless and righteous and immortal."

Athenagoras, A.D. 177, once an Athenian Philosopher, on "The Resurrection":

"And as this follows of necessity; there must by all means be a resurrection of the bodies which are dead or even entirely dissolved, and the same men must be formed anew . . . for if this takes place, the end befitting the nature of men follows also. And the end of an intelligent life and of a rational judgment, we shall make no mistake in saying, is to be occupied uninterruptedly with those objects to which the natural reason is chiefly and primarily adapted, and to delight unceasingly in the contemplation of Him, who is, and of His decrees."

Origen,<sup>2</sup> 185-254 A.D., pupil and successor of Clement of Alexandria, founded a school at Cæsarea; he was the greatest theologian and exegete of the Eastern Church. He writes:

"But he that despises the purification of the word of God and the doctrine of the Gospel only keeps himself for dreadful and penal purifications afterward; that so the fire of hell may purge him in torments whom neither apostolical doctrine nor gospel preaching has cleansed, according to that which is written of being 'purified by fire.' But how long this purification which is wrought out by penal fire shall endure, or for how many periods or ages it shall torment sinners, He only knows to whom all judgment is committed by the Father." (*Commentary on Rom.*, Book 8, Chap. 11.)

Again we give but a sample:

"The end of the world, then, and the final consummation will take place when every one shall be subjected to punishment for his sins; a time which God alone knows, when He will bestow on each one what he deserves. We think, indeed, that the goodness of God, through His Christ, may recall all His creatures to one end, even His enemies being conquered and subdued . . . 'For Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.' But if even that unreserved declaration of the apostle does not sufficiently inform us what is meant by 'enemies being placed under His feet,' listen to what he says in the following words, 'For all things must be put under Him.' What, then is this 'putting under' by which all things must be made subject to Christ? I am of opinion that it is this very subjection by which we also wish to be subject to Him, by which the apostles also were subject, and all the saints who have been followers of Christ. For the name 'subjection' by which we are subject to Christ, indicates that the salvation which proceeds from Him belongs to His subjects, agreeably to the declaration of David,

<sup>2</sup> See Farrar's *Mercy and Judgment*, chapters X, XI and XII on Origen and Church Councils (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York).

'Shall not my soul be subject unto God? From Him cometh my salvation'." (Origen, *De Principiis*, Book 1, Chap. 6, etc.)

"When thou hearest of the wrath of God, believe not that this wrath is a passion of God. It is a condescension of language, designed to convert and improve the child. . . . So God is described to us as angry, in order to our conversion and improvement, when in truth He is not angry." (*Origeniana*, edited by Huet. f. 378.)

Gieseler, the historian, says (*Eccl. Hist.*, Vol. 1, page 82):

"The opinion of the indestructible capacity for reformation in all rational creatures, and the finiteness of the torments of hell, was so common in the West, and so widely diffused among opponents of Origen, that tho it might not have sprung up without the influence of his school, yet it had become quite independent of it."

Eusebius of Cæsarea, 265-340 A.D., Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine; friend of Constantine; the greatest of the early Church historians, writes on Ps. 2:

"The Son 'breaking in pieces' His enemies is for the sake of remolding them, as a potter his own work; as Jer. 18:6 says: *i.e.*, to restore them once more to their former state."

In speaking of our Lord's subjection to the Father he says,

"Christ will therefore subject to Himself everything, and this saving subjection it is right to regard as similar to that, according to which the Son Himself shall be subjected unto Him, who subjected to Himself all things."

The thought here is clear, it is difficult to conceive of all things being subdued to signify any



other kind of subjection than that of the Son to the Father when the same Greek word is used in both cases. The Son's subjection was voluntary and loving, so must be that of all who yield to Him no matter what judgments and persuasion may have to be used!

Gregory Nazianzen, 330-390 A.D., Bishop of Constantinople; friend of Basil; studied at Alexandria and Athens, says:

"These, if they will, may go our way, which indeed is Christ's: but if not, let them go their own way. In another place perhaps they shall be baptized with fire, that last baptism, which is not only very painful, but enduring also; which eats up, as if it were hay, all defiled matter, and consumes all vanity and vice." (*Orat.* 39, §19.)

"Adam receives death as a gain, and thereby the cutting off of sin; that evil should not be immortal: and so the penalty turns out a kindness, for thus I am of opinion it is God punishes." (*Orat.* 42.)

Ambrose, 340-397 A.D., Bishop of Milan; converted Augustine by his preaching; the Father of Latin hymnology; he reproduced many of the writings of the Greek Fathers. He says (on Ps. 1:54):

"Our Savior has appointed two kinds of resurrection in accordance with which John says in the Apocalypse, 'Blessed is he that hath part in the first resurrection,' for such come to grace without the judgment. As for those who do not come to the first, but are reserved until the second resurrection, these shall be burnt until their appointed times, between the first and second resurrection; or if they should not have fulfilled them then, they shall remain still longer in punishment."

Athanasius, 296-373 A.D., called "the Great," "Father of Orthodoxy," Pillar of Orthodoxy; Bishop of Alexandria; writer of many works; especially noted for defending the deity of our Lord. To him is ascribed a treatise in which he writes:

"While the devil thought to kill one he is deprived of all . . . cast out of Hades, and sitting by the gates, sees all the fettered beings led forth by the courage of the Savior."

His view of evil argues strongly for its final extinction from God's universe:

"Now certain Greeks, having erred from the right way, and not having known Christ, have ascribed to evil a substantive and independent existence. In this they make a double mistake: either in denying the Creator to be maker of all things, if evil had an independent subsistence and being of its own; or again, if they mean that He is maker of all things, they will of necessity admit Him to be maker of evil also. . . . How could two principles exist, contrary one to another: or what is it that divides them, for them to exist apart? For it is impossible for them to exist together, because they are mutually destructive."

Gregory of Nyssa, 332-398 A.D.; a leading theologian of the Eastern Church and one of the most prominent figures in the second great Church Council which practically established the orthodoxy of the Nicene Creed. He writes:

"For it is needful that evil should some day be wholly and absolutely removed out of the circle of being. . . . For inasmuch as it is not in the nature of evil to exist without the will,

when every will comes to be in God, will not evil go on to absolute extinction, by reason of there being no receptacle of it left?" ("Dialogue of the Soul and Resurrection," Book 3).

"Therefore the Divine judgement does not as its chief object cause pain to those who have sinned, but works good alone by separating from evil, and drawing to a share in blessedness. But this severance of good from evil causes the pain (of the judgment). In other words, the penalty is the cure; it is merely the unavoidable pain attending the removal of the intruding element of sin." ("Dialogue of the Soul and Resurrection").

"If this (sin) be not cured here, its cure is postponed to a future life. As sure remedies for obstinate cases, so God announces His future judgment for the cure of the diseases of the soul, and that judgment uses threats to the lazy and vain . . . in order that, through fear, we may be trained to avoiding evil; but by those who are more intelligent, it (the judgment) is believed to be a medicine, a cure from God, who is bringing the creature, which he has formed, back to that state of grace which first existed." (*Cat. Orat.* VIII).

Gregory of Nyssa says again (*Orat. pro Mortuis*):

"Wherefore at the same time liberty of free-will should be left to nature and yet the evil be purged away, the wisdom of God discovered, this plan to suffer man to do what he would, that having tasted the evil which he desired and learning by experience for what wretchedness he had bartered away the blessings he had, he might of his own will hasten back with desire to the first blessedness, either being purged in this life through prayer and discipline, or after his departure hence through the cleansing fire."

In Gregory's "Catechetical Orations" our Lord is spoken of as "the One who both delivers man from evil, and who heals the inventor of evil himself."

Neander, speaking of Gregory of Nyssa, says:

"But this particular doctrine (of the final restitution of all) was expounded and maintained with greatest ability in works written expressly for that purpose by Gregory of Nyssa. God, he maintained, had created rational beings in order that they might be self-conscious and free vessels for the communications of the original fountain of all good. All punishments are means of purification, ordained by divine love to purge rational beings from moral evil, and to restore them back to that communion with God which corresponds to their nature. God would not have permitted the existence of evil, unless He had foreseen that by the Redemption all rational beings would in the end, according to their destination, attain to the same blessed fellowship with Himself."

Another discriminating writer<sup>s</sup> remarks:

"Now when it is borne in mind that Gregory of Nazianzen presided at the Second General Church Council, and that to Gregory of Nyssa tradition ascribes all those additions to the original Nicene Creed which were made at the same Second General Council, and which we now recite as portions of it—when we remember the esteem and works of this same Gregory of Nyssa have ever been held both during his life and since his death, and that he was referred to by both the Fifth and Seventh General Councils as among the highest authorities of the Church—we shall be better able to judge the worth of the assertion, which is sometimes made, that the doctrine of final restitution is a heresy."

Jerome, 340-420 A.D., devoted to Scripture study; revised the old Latin translations and translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into

<sup>s</sup> *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, by Andrew Jukes, page 180 (Thomas Wittaker).

Latin of the New Testament; finally settled at Bethlehem:

"Our Lord descends, and was shut up in the eternal bars, in order that He might set free all who had been shut up" . . .  
"The Lord descended to the place of punishment and torment, in which was the rich man, in order to liberate the prisoners." (On Isa. 14:7).

Jerome, writing on Zeph. 3:8-10, says:

"The nations are gathered to the Judgment, . . . that on them may be poured out all the wrath of the fury of the Lord, . . . and this in pity, and with a design to heal—for the nations being assembled for judgment, in order that wrath may be poured on them; not in part but in whole, both wrath and fury being united; then whatever is earthly is consumed in the whole world . . . in order that every one may return to the confession of the Lord, that in Jesus' Name every knee may bow, and every tongue may confess that He is Lord."

Again he says:

"All God's enemies shall perish, not that they shall cease to exist but cease to be enemies."

Theodoret, 386-485 A.D., Bishop of Cyprus; Fellow student of Nestorius and John of Antioch; Pupil of Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia; a leading scholar and theologian of his century.

In his "Homily on Ezek. 6:6" he shows the reason of punishment:

"For the Lord, the lover of men, torments us only to cure us, that He may put a stop to the course of our iniquity. All these

things, He says, I do, and bring in desolation, that I may extinguish men's madness and rage after idols."

Augustine, 354-430 A.D., was born in Numidia; taught rhetoric at Milan, where he heard Ambrose. He was the greatest of the four great Latin Church Fathers (Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory the Great). His influence probably more than that of any other of the Church Fathers brought forward and emphasized the doctrine of never-ending punishment. He spoke with greater consideration for those who differed with him than many of the moderns.

"And now I see I must have a gentle disputation with certain tender hearts of our own religion, who are unwilling to believe that everlasting punishment will be inflicted, either on all those whom the just Judge shall condemn to the pains of hell, or even on some of them, but who think that after certain periods of time, longer or shorter according to the proportion of their crimes, they shall be delivered out of that state." (*De Civ. Dei*, lib. 21, c. 17).

And in *Encheirid. ad Laurent*, c. 29, re refers to

"The *very many* in his day, who tho not denying the Holy Scriptures, do not believe in endless torments."

He does not declare them unorthodox.

Augustine, in replying to the Manichees, says:

"Who is so blind as not to see that evil is that which is opposed to the nature of a thing? And by this principle is your heresy refuted; for evil as opposed to the nature is not a nature. But you say, that evil is a certain nature and substance.

That what is opposed to nature struggles against it and would destroy it. So that which exists tends to make non-existence. For nature is only what is understood, after its kind, to be something . . . If then you will consider the matter, evil consists in this very thing; namely, in a defection from being, and a tendency to non-being."

"If this is so," says an able writer, "what becomes of Augustine's doctrine of never-ending punishment, which surely is never-ending existence in evil?"

Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and others argue against evil having absolute reality, it could not therefore continue in eternity.

In collecting the above testimonies we have given only a representative portion of the great leaders of the Church of the first four hundred years. During this whole period it seems clear that over half of the authoritative teachers in the Church held the ultimate salvation of all, and in no case was this view regarded as heretical. When we remember that many who taught this view spoke the language of the New Testament and represented the first promulgators of the Gospel, the evidence is strengthened. In later years some of the objectors could not even read the Bible in the original language.

We need to remember also that on account of the doctrine of Reserve which was held by so many of the Church Fathers (see chapter on Doctrine of Reserve), some who are quoted as holding to the doctrine of never-ending torment have other passages which teach quite the contrary. Many held

the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all for themselves and for the other doctors of divinity; but felt that it was not safe for the multitude, and therefore taught them an endless perdition.

When we remember the cruelty and militarism of the Roman Empire, and also the pagan teaching that was permitted to enter on this great subject because it was found in the pagan and barbarian religions of many who profest allegiance to Christianity, many of these we fear, judging from their actions, had not received a truly Christian spirit, and we are not surprized that "endless torment" was so largely incorporated in the Western Church. Besides this, it took the dark ages and medieval ignorance to render this doctrine almost universal. It is time to return to the Bible and to the teaching of the early Church, which is not only Biblical but is sane and is also consistent with a God of love and the sacrifice of His Son who was a "propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2).



## XXVIII

### THE WITNESS OF THE POETS

DR. F. W. GUNSAULUS introduced a series of lectures on the *Higher Ministries of Recent English Poetry* with these words:

"Next to religion, poetry is the most vital, and at the same time the most far-reaching, of those movements of the human soul by which it declares its deeps of feeling and its heights of aspiration. Verse is the innocent manifestation of the primal music of humanity, as the seer, the *Vates*, stand with man and the mysteries which surround him. Along with the smoking altar comes the ballad of the remotest savage; and the latest child of culture begins to see that if the word "minister" is to go out of his vocabulary, that the other word "minstrel," joined with it in the same ancient root, will perhaps depart also. The Psalmist, if he be truly such, is as much a poet as he is a religionist."

Another spiritual thinker has said:

"I am a great debtor to poems. Poets always seem to me to say deeper things than other teachers; perhaps deeper than they themselves are conscious of. For they speak out of the heart and the heart is the real seer, often shaming the head, which thinks it knows so well."<sup>1</sup>

We do not put the witness of the poets on the same plane as the Bible. We rest our case on

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Andrew Jukes*, edited by Herbert H. Jeaffreson, page 96 (Longmans, Green & Co., London).

God's infallible Word, but it is interesting to note how many of the poets teach the ultimate triumph of good over evil and of God over Satan. Those who do not like poetry need not waste their time on this chapter, but those who do love the poets and other verse may learn a truth from them that they might not get elsewhere.

Our own Whittier wrote in a letter in 1882:

"Especially I am glad that so many dear friends, whose names recall the worthies of past generations, are able to partake with me of the great hope that He whose will it is that all should turn to Him and live, and whose tender mercy endureth forever and is over all the works of His hands, will do the best that is possible for all His creatures. What that may be, we know not, but we can trust Him to the uttermost. This hope and this trust in the mercy of the All Merciful I have felt impelled to express, yet with a solemn recognition of the awful consequences of alienation from Him and a full realization of the truth that sin and suffering are inseparable . . . Let me say that the hope which I humbly cherish for myself and my fellow creatures rests not upon any work or merit of my own, but upon the Infinite Love, manifested in the life and death of the Divine Master, and in the light and grace afforded to all. In the communion and fellowship of that faith in the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, which is the vital principle of our Religious Society."<sup>2</sup>

We might expect from Whittier the following poem:

#### THE CRY OF A LOST SOUL

"In that black forest, where, when day is done,  
With a snake's stillness glides the Amazon  
Darkly from sunset to the rising sun,

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*, by Samuel T. Pickard, Vol. 2, page 683 (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.).

A cry, as of the pained heart of the wood,  
The long, despairing moan of solitude  
And darkness and the absence of all good,

Startles the traveler, with a sound so drear,  
So full of hopeless agony and fear,  
His heart stands still and listens like his ear.

The guide, as if he heard a dead-bell toll,  
Starts, drops his oar against the gunwale's thole,  
Crosses himself, and whispers, 'A lost soul !'

'No, Señor, not a bird. I know it well,—  
It is the pained soul of some infidel  
Or cursed heretic that cries from hell.

'Poor fool ! with hope still mocking his despair,  
He wanders, shrieking on the midnight air  
For human pity and for Christian prayer.

'Saints strike him dumb ! Our holy Master hath  
No prayer for him who, sinning unto death,  
Burns always in the furnace of God's wrath !'

Thus to the baptized pagan's cruel lie,  
Lending new horror to that mournful cry,  
The voyager listens, making no reply.

Dim burns the boat-lamp ; shadows deepen round,  
From giant trees with snake-like creepers wound,  
And the black water glides without a sound.

But in the traveler's heart a secret sense  
Of nature plastic to benign intents,  
And an eternal good in Providence,

Lifts to the starry calm of heaven his eyes ;  
And lo ! rebuking all earth's ominous cries,  
The Cross of pardon lights the tropic skies !

'Father of all' he urges his strong plea,  
 'Thou lovest all: Thy erring child may be  
 Lost to himself, but never lost to Thee!

'All souls are Thine; the wings of morning bear  
 None from that Presence which is everywhere,  
 Nor hell itself can hide, for Thou art there.

'Through sins of sense, perversities of will,  
 Through doubt and pain, through guilt and shame and ill,  
 Thy pitying eye is on Thy creature still.

'Wilt Thou not make, Eternal Source and Goal!  
 In Thy long years, life's broken circle whole,  
 And change to praise the cry of a lost soul? "

Matthew Arnold may not be accounted very spiritual with his strong bent toward Agnosticism, but he had a truer conception of God than that he found in Tertullian and some of the other writers who seemed to exult in the doctrine of eternal punishment. He uses the figure of the sheep and lambs for the righteous and the goats, literally, the kids of the goats, for the wicked (Arnold knew that in the Catacombs the good Shepherd was represented as bearing a kid of the goats), and so he writes in one of his sonnets:

"He saves the sheep, the goats He can not save  
 So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sighed,  
 The Infant Church; of love she felt the tide  
 Stream on her from her Lord's yet open side.  
 And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,  
 In those halls subterranean, where she hid  
 Her head 'mid ignominy, shame and glooms,  
 She her good Shepherd's faithful image drew,  
 And on His shoulders not a lamb, but kid."

Cowper might be quoted at length. He believed devoutly in all God had promised of a full redemption. He writes in *The Task*:

"Thus heav'n-ward all things tend. For all were once  
Perfect, and all must be at length restor'd  
So God has greatly purpos'd; who would else  
In His dishonor'd works Himself endure  
Dishonor, and be wronged without redress.  
Haste then and wheel away a shatter'd world,  
Ye slow-revolving seasons: We would see  
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)  
A world that does not dread and hate His laws,  
And suffer for its crimes; would learn how fair  
The creature is that God pronounces good."

Walt Whitman at times seems to rise no higher than some sort of nature worship, but at others he challenges death as he discerns the final glorious outcome with a note of spiritual jubilation. One who knew him and knew God said:

"I love Walt Whitman's matchless death-song, and always want to send it to every dying friend."

"Joy, shipmate, joy,  
(Pleased to the soul at death I cry)  
Our life is closed, our life begins;  
The long, long anchorage we leave,  
The ship is clear at last, She leaps,  
She swiftly courses from the shore!  
Joy, shipmate, joy!"

Tennyson embodied in his song the ultimate victory of our God and His Christ:

"That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves—"

Tennyson speaks again:

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring."

Longfellow, in *The Golden Legend* has among others these words, teaching that in some way even Satan shall be caused to work good:

"Lo! over the mountain steeps  
A dark, gigantic shadow sweeps  
Beneath my feet;

A blackness inwardly brightening  
With sullen heat,  
As a storm-cloud lured with lightning,  
Repeated and again repeated,  
Deep and loud  
As the reverberation  
Of cloud answering unto cloud,  
Swells and rolls away in the distance  
As if the sheeted  
Lightning retreated,  
Baffled and thwarted by the winds resistance.  
It is Lucifer  
The son of mystery;  
And since God suffers him to be  
He, too, is God's minister  
And labors for some good  
By us not understood!"

Lowell, in speaking of one whom he admired and loved, but who died, writes voicing salvation for all:

"Thou art not idle in thy higher sphere  
Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,  
And strength to perfect what is dreamed of here  
Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

For sure in Heaven's wide chambers there is room  
For love and pity and for helpful deeds;  
Else were our summons thither but a doom  
To life more vain than this in clayey weeds.

From off the starry mountain-peak of song,  
Thy spirit shows me in the coming time,  
An earth unwithered by the foot of wrong,  
A race revering its own soul sublime.

What wars, what martyrdoms, what crimes may come,  
 Thou knowest not, nor I; but God will lead  
 The prodigal soul from want and sorrow home  
 And Eden ope her gates to Adam's seed."

Sidney Lanier, one of our sweetest and most musical of poets, taught in "How Love Looked For Hell," that to Sense and Mind there was a real hell but that when Love sought the place and found it, it was no longer hell. In "The Symphony" he sets forth the final triumph of Love. We quote only in part:

"Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to west,  
 Love, Love alone can pore  
 On thy dissolving score  
 Of harsh half-phrasings,  
 Blotted ere writ,  
 And double erasings  
 Of chords most fit.

Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,  
 May read thy weltering palimpsest.  
 To follow Time's dying melodies through,  
 And never to lose the old in the new,  
 And ever to solve the discords true—  
 Love alone can do.

And ever Love hears the poor folks' crying,  
 And ever Love hears the women's sighing,  
 And ever wise childhood's deep implying,  
 But never a trader's glozing and lying.

And yet shall Love himself be heard  
 Tho long deferred, tho long deferred:  
 O'er the modern waste a dove has whirred:  
 Music is Love in search of a word."



We believe that music, poetry and art are struggling, whether they know it or not, to find God and will one day find Him who is The Word, and that He is that Love which "never faileth," and lives to see of the travail of His soul and will be satisfied.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning believed in the ultimate triumph of God and witnessed to a coming day when death shall die:

"Mine heart is armed not in panoply  
Of the old Roman iron, nor assumes  
The Stoic valor. 'Tis a human fear:—  
That only for the hope the cross inspires,  
That only for the Man who died and lives,  
'Twould crouch beneath thy scepter's royalty,  
With faintness of the pulse, and backward cling  
To life. But knowing what I soothly know,  
High-seeming Death, I dare thee! and have hope,  
In God's good time, of showing to thy face  
An unsuccumbing spirit, which sublime  
May cast away the low anxieties  
That wait upon the flesh—the reptile moods;  
And enter the eternity to come,  
Where live the dead, and only death shall die."

Robert Browning, with all his strength, would not have been half what he was had he not clearly seen God's complete victory over evil, not by suppressing evil but by overcoming it with good. He says in *Abt Vogler*:

"There never shall be one lost good! what was shall live  
as before,  
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound.

What was good shall be good, with for evil so much  
good more;  
On earth the broken arcs, in heaven the perfect round.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth  
too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;  
Enough that He heard it once, we shall hear it  
by and by."

We close by quoting that remarkable poem by Francis Thompson, entitled "The Hound of Heaven." It expresses how a wanderer from God, a sort of prodigal son, is hounded by God's providence and grace. He thinks that he has escaped or can escape, but he is mistaken; the Spirit of the God of Love is still on his trail. It reminds us of the 139th Psalm:

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or  
whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

One remarked in looking at the face of one of the great literary men of his day that "he looked as if he came from heaven by way of hell." Thus God will seek through earth's distances and even to hell's depths "until He find." We have space to quote only the latter part of this great poem:

“Now of that long pursuit  
Comes on at hand the bruit;  
That voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
‘And is thy earth so marred,  
Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
Strange, piteous futile thing!  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I make much of naught’ (He said),  
‘And human love needs human meriting:  
How hast thou merited—  
Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
Alack thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child’s mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
Rise, clasp my hand, and come.’  
Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
‘Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.’”

## XXIX

### CONSCIENCE MUST BE SATISFIED

God's Word is the source of our information as to God's plan of salvation. There are many things in the Bible higher than reason, but nothing contrary to reason. There is nothing in the whole Word of God that does not commend itself to the Christian conscience. The natural conscience of men needs illumination by the Holy Spirit before it can fully appreciate divine truth, and there must be something wrong in the interpretation of any Bible doctrine that does not commend itself to the general illuminated Christian consciousness. We believe that we can, according to the teaching of God's Word, go even further than this and say with the Apostle Paul, "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to *every* man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2). If God's plan is to be effective, there is need, not only for Christians, but also for non-Christians to have the truth commend itself to their conscience; for even the non-Christian has a conscience, and through that conscience God's Spirit witnesses to the truth. God's plan is so fundamentally simple that every one will

have to witness that his conscience bears witness to its being true. Often those who do not like to hear the plain truth of God and oppose it, when questioned, have admitted that their conscience said it was true, but they did not want to hear it.

What is the case with the doctrine of eternal torment? We find that a majority of its advocates, Christian preachers and teachers with illumined consciences, say again and again, "I wish this were not true."

Sir Robert Anderson thus presents the problem to himself in his *Human Destiny*:

"According to the most careful estimate, the population of the world exceeds one thousand four hundred millions. Not one-third of these are Christians even in name; and of this small minority how few there are whose lives give proof that they are traveling heavenward! And what is the destiny of all the rest? Any estimate of their number must be inaccurate and fanciful; and accuracy, if attainable, would be practically useless. As a matter of arithmetic it is easy to deal with millions as with tens; but when we come to realize that every unit is a human being, with a little world of joys and sorrows all his own, and an unbounded capacity for happiness or misery, the mind is utterly paralyzed by the effort to realize the problem.

"And these fourteen hundred millions are but a single wave of the great tide of human life that breaks, generation after generation, upon the shore of the unknown world. What future then awaits these untold myriads of millions of mankind? Most of us have been trained in the belief that their portion is an existence of endless, hopeless torment. But few there are, surely, who have carried this belief to middle-age unchallenged. Sometimes it is the vastness of the numbers whose fate is involved that startles us into skepticism. Sometimes it is the memory of

friends now gone, who lived and died impenitent. As we think of an eternity in which they 'shall be tormented day and night forever and ever', the mind grows weary and the heart grows sick, and we turn to ask ourselves, Is not God infinite in love? Is not the great Atonement infinite in value? Is it credible then that such a future is to be the sequel to a brief and sorely tempted life of sin? Is it credible that for all eternity—that eternity in which the triumph of the Cross shall be complete, and God shall be 'all in all'—there shall still remain an underworld of seething sin and misery and horror?"

And again:

"No candid person will dispute that the revelation of Divine love creates a presumption against the possibility of eternal punishment. On the other hand, it is still more dishonest to deny—and in fact it is admitted—that certain passages of Scripture support the doctrine. The fairest mode, therefore, in which this inquiry can possibly be entered on is to dismiss for the moment both the presumption against, and the texts in favor of, the 'orthodox' belief, and to consider without any bias the passages which are used to prove universal reconciliation. If these should be found to teach that doctrine unequivocally, the question is at an end, for in a seeming conflict of texts the presumption against endless misery must turn the scale. But more than this: even should these Scriptures seem of doubtful meaning, we shall be prepared to lean toward the broader interpretation, provided only that such a rendering will neither disturb foundation truths, nor land us in difficulties akin to those we seek escape from."

The conclusions reached by the author just quoted failed to answer the questions raised by his own conscience. He had the approval of his conscience in one regard, *viz.*, in making God's Word the final court of appeal. We fear, however, that he allowed the traditional interpretation of God's

Word to govern him rather than the Word itself. He was compelled to hold his view without the full support of a commending conscience. Among other things, he failed to distinguish eternity from time, and the Headship of Christ as above the headship of Adam.

We hold that altho the Word of God is supreme, when we rightly interpret it such interpretation will have the support and sanction of our whole moral being, and there will not be found anything in God's Word, when rightly understood, that contradicts the highest spiritual intuitions of conscience.

We find almost without exception that conscientious writers and speakers who preach the doctrine of eternal torment say: "I wish that the things I am going to preach to you to-night were not true," or "I would change the doctrine if I could," or "Time and time again I have come up to this awful doctrine and tried to find some way of escape from it."

It is evident to a thoughtful mind that the doctrine of eternal torment which they proclaim, they do not fully believe, altho they force themselves to think they do. No man really believes anything to which his conscience does not say "Yes." All words and intellectual declarations of faith and interpretations of Scripture are insufficient when conscience witnesses to the contrary. The center of human personality, the *sine qua non* of per-

sonality, is our spirit, which is not a spirit without conscience. Conscience is not only an essential part of personality, but also its witness is absolutely necessary in order to our having true religion. Conscience, therefore, with its intuitions and instincts, has to be satisfied, or there is no peace nor joy, nor satisfaction in God. Without conscience there could be no hell of remorse, and without conscience there could be no heaven of bliss. Conscience is God's judgment throne within us, where every day is a judgment day. God's own acquittals and approvals are heard in conscience, and conscience cleansed by the precious blood and obeyed is the foundation of the heart's inner-chamber of love and peace, where there is abiding fellowship with the living God.

Mark you, it is not only the untold and unending sufferings of the creature against which conscience witnesses, but the witness is against God's very character. In the light of an illumined conscience it is impossible to conceive of a God of love making a creation that He foresaw would result in eternal torments to millions and millions of His creatures. Every man's conscience cries out and says, "This does not commend itself to me in the sight of God, such a God is not our God." Praise God! Such a conception has not come from God, but from an erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures and paganized ideas of punishment.



Hear the words of Rev. Thomas Allin,<sup>1</sup> who has given this subject careful consideration:

"The popular creed presents us with a Being who fluctuates between tenderness and wrath: One who has ever-changing plans, and a will that is divided, and baffled. For half His creatures, His love is in fact momentary and His vengeance eternal. For the other half, His pity is eternal and His wrath transient. This God is not even Lord in His own house; for the worst and feeblest of His creatures can defeat His most cherished plan; can paralyze the Cross of Christ. In such a God I can see no trace of Him who is almighty and unchanging, whose property is to always have mercy; whose love, tho it must take the *form* of vengeance against sin, never ceases to pursue the sinners for 'love never faileth'; *never* to all eternity. Against the popular caricature of God, this . . . is a special protest—that caricature which represents eternal love as turning to hate as soon as the sinner dies; which vainly talks of an Eternal Father, whose judgments mean salvation in one world and change to damnation in the next; of eternal love, whose fire purifies and refines in time and then beyond the grave turns to mere (purposeless) torture. All this is not alone morally repulsive, but a plain contradiction in terms."

The popular conception or rather misconception of God above referred to does not commend itself to "every man's conscience in the sight of God."

From the same writer we quote again:

"A further point there is, so vital that I dare not omit it, tho to touch it may involve the charge of presumption. I feel unable to decide how far Bishop Butler designed to teach that "probation" is an adequate description of our relationship to God. Yet it seems that practically his great name is (largely) the authority with those who teach in fact, if not in words,

<sup>1</sup> Reference in chapter on Witness of the Early Church Fathers.

that God is primarily the Judge, or the Inspector, of His creatures. Against this idea, which seems to me to be working on every side untold mischief, I must once more protest. Hence comes the fatal blot of placing Sin at the center of the moral system and not Love. Hence the removal of 'Our Father' while the Inspector or Accountant takes His place. And this system is believed to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence vain and idle wranglings over a first and second probation, on the part of those who forget, that, if God is our Father, the central fact that dominates all else in our moral relationship to Him, is, *if He is Father.*"

His Father-love yearns for the salvation of His prodigal children, and He will not be satisfied till they are fully saved and trained and grown fully into His image.

Thomas Erskine of Linlathen remarks in *The Purpose of God*:

"The essential characteristic of a Father's love is that it is inextinguishable . . . If I am here simply on trial, if I regard God as one who is keeping a debtor and creditor account with me, I may in word call him 'Father', and in word ascribe love to Him, but I can not really regard Him as Father."

The former writer proceeds:

"Hence the painful evasions; the manifold sophistry; the halting logic that (honestly) turns the Bible upside down; *i.e.*, teaching that all men drawn to Christ means half mankind drawn to the devil; all things reconciled through Christ means the final perdition of half the universe. The notion, which is in fact that of the popular creed, *i.e.*, that God is in the Bible detailing the story of His own defeat, is telling how sin has proved too strong for Him; this notion is worse than absurd. Assuredly the Bible is not the story of sin deepening into eternal

ruin—of creation darkened forever by a ghastly hell—of God's own Son worsted in His utmost effort. It is from the opening to the close the story of grace stronger than sin—of life victorious over every form of death—of God triumphing over evil."

It is only by the manifestation of the truth as it really is that we commend "ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

There are those who, for conscience sake, endeavor to devise some way out of the difficulties presented by the doctrine of eternal torment. One of these ways is to say that all who have not heard the gospel will not be lost. This attempt usually is not much more than a benevolent effort to get rid of difficulties. It is forgotten that if God put every one of His sinning creatures in heaven it would not be heaven for them at all. There has to be a change of heart for one to be fitted for heaven or heaven would be hell. The trouble with the sinner is that because of sin the light of God has gone out in his heart. That light needs to be kindled again. Christ is the true "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The man in sin is dead to God but alive to God's law. The witness of Christ in one's conscience is to God's law. If the heathen reject this light, they are in reality rejecting Christ. If they follow it, they will get more light; and as they keep on following it, they will find that they have Him who is "the true Light." They are all without excuse if they reject this light. They are ap-

proved of God if they walk in this light; for such a walk implies yielding to and obeying the real Christ.

Conscience may be defined as an intuition; *viz.*, it witnesses to the difference between right and wrong. Conscience is also an instinct in that it gives us the feeling of oughtness; *viz.*, that we ought to do right and that we ought not to do wrong. This feeling, when obeyed, gives joy, and when disobeyed gives sorrow, and thus implies future joy or future retribution. Conscience, in this sense, is not educated, but is the witness of God. In this sense, Christ is the "Light which lighteth every man"; in this sense conscience as the divine witness is universal.

There are other elements that are counted along with conscience, and that depend on education and environment. These can be cultivated. They might more properly be called our opinions. All have the witness that we ought not to murder; but the different definitions of murder may differ because of education. God's voice always says, "Do not murder"; but opinion tells us what murder means, and then our judgment has to decide whether in the particular case it is murder or not. The permanent witness in conscience is God's voice. It carries its own sanctions. Its authority is recognized as supreme. It can, therefore, come from no one else except God in Christ; and they that walk in this light, may be saved through Him

who is the true Light. How blessed will it be for them to get acquainted with the Christ as He was manifested upon this earth!

A man is converted when he turns from sin unto God. The Scripture indicates in many places the new birth as the real outcome of the right kind of morality. Mere morality does not save any one; but morality, or the obedience to conscience, if persisted in, leads one to the real Christ. "Every one that doeth (with purpose of heart) righteousness is born of God" (1 John 2:29). As the ten lepers obeyed the Lord, even while in the path of obedience,—we read, "as they went, they were cleansed." This derogates nothing from faith. It is only making faith manifest by life. Many who can not understand the philosophy of faith, can be told to do that which, if they do it, will imply real faith.

The only way that any of us came to the Lord was by yielding and obeying the light. The intellectual understanding of this light was not as important as the accepting and trusting the light sufficiently to act upon it. I prove my faith in an ocean steamer to cross to another country by the act, no matter how tremblingly I get on board. Our conception of salvation is so much greater than the initial step, that it will take all of the ages to let us see its greatness and glory; and no one will be saved in this age or in any other age but by trusting the light, for He is the Light of

“every man” and “the Light of the world,” the real Light. To Cornelius, Peter said, and conscience still repeats the same story, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34, 35). Salvation is more than initial acceptance, further light is needed. “Call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:13, 14). Cornelius and Peter and the rest of the saints who have passed into the presence of the Lord, are still hearing words of salvation whereby they shall be more and more saved.

It is from conscience that we learn that even in souls that are lost, “dead in trespasses and sins,” God has left a *nidus*, a “nest,” in which He works. Professor Laidlaw, in his *Bible Doctrine of Man*, speaking to this point, says:

“The leading peculiarity of the Bible doctrine of man in his origin and constitution we have seen to be its ascription to him of spiritual personality, formed and upheld by the Divine Maker. This places not the first man only, but all men, in a peculiar and inalienable relation to God: ‘In Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ And it is because the human spirit was and continues to be a spirit derived from God that it is possible for it still to approach or feel after and in a sense apprehend God. It is the other side of the relationship, however, which Scripture employs to throw light upon redemption. Its possibility is secured in the fact that God continues to stand in His original relation to all men, ‘The Father of spirits,’ ‘the

God of the spirits of all flesh,' 'for we are His offspring.' This, indeed, will not of itself give us a cause or reason for the undertaking of redemption; that is uniformly ascribed in Scripture to gracious love, the highest expression of the divine energy and nature. But that lost men are still His, in a sense which specially belongs to man in the universe of being, is the Bible ground of the possibility of redemption. Nay more, it is the basis of that large *preparatio evangelica* (gospel preparation) which Scripture recognizes everywhere. Because men are His, God has never left Himself without witness, nor without avenues of approach to the human spirit under the most unfavorable dispensations of humanity."

In conscience, which is a part of the ruins of the original nature of man, is found the principal place of God's working, and in addition to this, there is a sense of dependence also found in every man, and several other definite characteristics of man's fallen nature which God has left in order that He may work upon him. The lower animals do not have such *nidus*. Conscience, for instance, is found in them only as they have been trained in association with man. They have no direct capacity for God nor His law. Man is different; even in his fallen condition he has something for God to work upon. Hence we preach salvation to man and not to the lower animals. Man by nature in this life is as truly lost as he will be in the life to come. We do not say that his guilt is as great, nor his punishment and separation from God as truly realized here as there. This natural body with all its handicap keeps him from sensing the full consequences of his sins.

Every sinner that passes into the life to come has some element of conscience left, as well as some of the other important elements of which we are not now speaking. Even remorse is a condition closely connected with an unheeded conscience. Remorse comes as a judgment here, and Christian workers who know the Lord and His Word, have often been used to deliver those who were suffering from remorse. Is God then not able? He is able for every disease of spirit, soul, or body. "Earth has no sorrow that heaven can not heal," and will not heal some day. We have never known of a case of one passing into the next life with a moral nature entirely obliterated. It would be foolish to bestow punishment on any one who had no element of a moral nature. Conscience cries out again and says it is only right to punish one who would know what punishment meant, and any one who knows what punishment means has enough of a place left in his nature for God to work upon. The man capable of punishment, involving moral perception, is salvable.

In the chapter on the Limitations of Human Freedom some of the reasons are given why there is always this *nidus* or a moral remainder. The chapter on "Final Permanence of Character" should also be consulted.

The Antediluvians sinned away the day of grace while Noah was preaching and the Ark was preparing, and yet their moral nature was not de-



stroyed utterly, for Christ preached to them hundreds of years afterward, for their salvation (1 Peter 3:18-20 and 4:6).

After the resurrection in "the dispensation of the fulness of times," there is to be the greatest season of the application of redemption in getting all back into Christ as their Head. "All souls are mine" (Ezek. 18:4), saith the Lord. "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for *all* live unto Him" (Luke 20:38).

Conscience is satisfied with such a God and such a plan; and our Lord also shall "see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied."

### XXX

## THE TEST OF USEFULNESS AS A DIVINE ACCREDITING

THE question may arise in the heart of a Christian worker, "Is it not all right to sacrifice a little frankness and truth in order to usefulness?"

The Word of God tells us to "Buy the truth, and sell it not." All truth that we really have, has cost its possessor something, and sometimes it is gained only at a great price. God bids us buy it. It is true it is "without money and without price," and yet it costs dearly; but it is always worth more than it costs. Truth to become really ours has to be held more strongly than a mere opinion or belief; beliefs have to be burned into convictions and convictions changed into life.

There is always the temptation to compromise; and when any truth is compromised or denied, it is apt to become weaker and fainter to our consciousness. God's Word says, "sell it not," for all truth is a part of Him who is the Incarnate Truth, and in selling it, to that degree, we are selling Him.

God always desires us to be tactful in the presentation of truth, but He never wants us to sacrifice it, nor to practise diplomatic falsehoods to promote His cause. There are times when one may be called upon to sacrifice greatly for some truth; but if done unto God in the spirit of joy and faith, it always yields its "hundredfold," and that kind of truthfulness is always one of the secrets of power: we might say, a rare secret of power.

It is contrary to heavenly wisdom to prefer a present profit to a future good. In fact, he who is not looking for profit at all, but only at what will please God—that man has already the greatest profit in a more intimate fellowship with God. And he who has the most intimate fellowship with God, will have the life of greatest usefulness, whether he or the world knows it. Any other principle of life and action always sells its birthright for a mess of pottage.

We will give two illustrations from real life. Hannah Whitall Smith is the well-known author of that book that has been helpful to hundreds of thousands, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. It is not so generally known, but Mrs. H. W. Smith was a strong believer in the ultimate salvation of all. We quote several extracts from her *Spiritual Autobiography*:

As was to be expected in those days, my views on restitution, which of course I had speedily announced, met with a great

deal of disapproval . . . And, as a fact, these very views, and the frank confession of them under rather trying circumstances, were the means of opening the way for some of our most important and successful work.

It came about in this wise. In 1873 my husband had come over to England to hold some meetings in the interests of the Higher Life, or, what I prefer to call it, the Life of Faith. I soon followed him, and upon my arrival in London I was invited to meet a company of leading Evangelical ladies, who were to decide as to whether it would be safe for them to endorse me, and lend their influence to the work. The occasion has thus been described by Lady Mount Temple, who was one of the party, in her life of Lord Mount Temple:

"I think it was in 1873 that Mr. Pearsall Smith came to England from America, followed in a few months by his dear, beautiful wife. It was a time long to be remembered. They came full, one may say, of the new wine of the Spirit, and longed to help others onward in the Divine life. A friend asked us to lunch to meet them. I shall never forget my first sight of Hannah Smith. We called her the 'angel of Churches,' and she looked like one, with her golden hair and clear beautifully cut face, in a dress distinctly her own, but simple as that of the Friends, among whom she had been brought up.

"I may mention what strongly drew me to her that day. I must confess that I was only a seeker after truth. Hannah was sitting in a little circle of excellent orthodox friends, who had assembled to hear of the good things that she had to impart, and she was there on her examination.

"She happened to have seen a funeral in the street, and as she spoke of it, we all put on the conventional look of sadness. 'Oh,' she said, 'when I meet a funeral I always give thanks for the brother or sister delivered from the trials and pains of this mortal state.' How wonderful, I thought, and I could not help exclaiming, 'Is that possible? Do you feel this about everybody?' I was indeed an *enfant terrible*. She stopt a moment and looked around. She was amongst a party of evangelicals at a time when the universal hope was deemed a heresy, and she was on her trial. She owns that she went through a few moments of conflict. But truth prevailed, and looking up,

with her bright glance, she said, 'Yes, about everybody, for I trust in the love of God.'<sup>1</sup> I yielded my heart at once to this manifestation of trust and love and candor."

I remember this occasion perfectly, and the thoughts that influenced me. I knew I was on my trial, and I thought very likely the whole party would be shocked, but I felt that loyalty to God demanded that I should tell what I knew would honor Him, and that I must be willing to leave the consequences in His care. The moment I ceased speaking Lady Mount Temple, (or Mrs. Cowper Temple, as she was then), left her seat and came across to where I was sitting, and, stranger tho I was, gave me a most loving kiss, and said at once, "You must come and have some meetings at Broadlands." How the rest of the party felt I do not know, but not a word of disapproval was uttered, and they were all afterward my best friends. And the result was that in a few weeks, Broadlands, Lord and Lady Mount Temple's place in Hampshire, was thrown open to us for all the future conferences, and for our whole after-work in England and elsewhere.

When in 1874 there was to be one of these conferences at Brighton, some of the committee who were helping to organize it got frightened about my heresies lest they should hinder the work, and induced my husband, who had preceded me to England, to write over to America and tell me that unless I would promise not to let my heresies be known while I was in England, they would strongly oppose my being allowed to take part in the meetings. When looking over an old package of letters lately I came across my reply, which I quote to show how I felt about it.

"Philadelphia, April 6, 1874. Thy letters from London have arrived. Thee need not think I should be grieved not to be allowed to speak in the meetings, for nothing would really suit me better. I am not in the least anxious to preach. In fact, I consider that it is a great favor on my part to be willing to do it, and not the least of a favor in people to be willing to listen to me. And if your committee should say, 'We do not want to hear you speak at Brighton,' I should have returned them hearty thanks. Nobody need feel any delicacy

<sup>1</sup> See chapter on The Unselfishness of God, page 202.

whatever in this direction. But it must be thoroughly understood that I compromise for nobody, and that I believe in restitution more and more. I do not think I could endure the misery I see in this poor sad sin-stricken world without it. Our temperance work brings us into contact with such helpless misery that my heart would burst if I did know that God loves all His creatures, and has something gracious in store for every one.

"So I wrote; and, as I would not compromise, and, as it was felt important to have me at the meetings, the committee dropt the subject, and decided to take me as I was, with all my heresies."

When my husband wrote me this, I replied as follows:

"Philadelphia. I am very glad thee has got out of thy difficulty about thy heretical preaching wife with so little trouble. But the idea of B——, with shaky views of his own, undertaking to excommunicate me! I really do not think it was honest. I do not choose to sail under false colors, and I am a thousand times stronger in my views of restitution every day I live. If they let me alone in England I shall probably not say much about it, but if there is the least hint of any compromise or underhand secrecy on my part, I shall blaze out in a perfect conflagration. For I can not endure anything like that. So you must please bear this in mind, ye Lords of Creation. Soberly however I do not feel at all drawn to preach or to teach restitution over there, and if the dear frightened orthodox friends do not make any fuss about it, I shall not be likely to. Their difficulties about me do not annoy me in the least. I believe I actually enjoy being the victim of the *odium theologicum*. I guess there is something of the war-horse in my composition.

"Whether the fears of the committee had been well-founded or not I can not tell, I only know that never for one single moment in all my work in England was I made to feel that my

views on restitution in the slightest degree hindered the entrance of the message I had to give, or closed any door for my work. In fact, I believe they made the way for me in many places that would otherwise not have been open. The truth was that my underlying belief in the absolutely unlimited justice and love of God, enabled me to speak with a far more courageous faith in Him than I could otherwise have done, and I am convinced that without it I should have been shorn of half my power."

We desire to cite but one more example. This time the incident is from the life of that distinguished missionary who spent a long life in China, Griffith John. There are many in our land and in all lands who have come under the power of his burning words; and many souls have been won for God and many missionaries and ministers have been led by his zeal and by his teaching to a life in Christ in the fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit.

On one of the most important occasions of his life, when addressing a great gathering of missionaries in convention in Shanghai, China, he said in part<sup>2</sup>:

"Now, then, let us go on. In going up and down this country, a man comes to me sometimes and says, 'Mr. John, do you suppose that all the heathen are going to hell?' And his impression is that if they do not go to hell, he has nothing to do with the mission work. Well, that is one way of putting the question; but there is another way of putting it, and I sometimes turn round and say, 'Sir, do you suppose that they

<sup>2</sup> Griffith John, *The Story of Fifty Years in China*, by R. Wardlaw Thompson, page 380 (A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York).

are all going to heaven?' I do not know where they are going; but one thing I am perfectly sure of, that they are not fit to go to heaven; and if I could tell you to-night that all the Chinese were launched into heaven just as they leave this world, I venture to say, my friends, that very few of you would care to go there at all, unless you went as missionaries. Another says, 'Mr. John, here is a man trying to live up to the light, feeling after God. What becomes of him?' That is a difficult question, too, but I have no hesitation in saying this, that he who worketh righteousness, whether in China or England, is accepted by Him. But then another man tells me, 'Well, Mr. John, my theological views are changed, and I do not see that I can take any special interest in the missionary work after this.' There is an old view, which, I suppose, may be presented in this aspect—that the majority of the heathen go down into endless conscious misery on their departure from this life. Do you believe this? Do you know what you are believing? I do not say you are not right, but do you really know what you are believing? If that be true, just look at what it means in regard to China. In China it is computed that some 33,000 die daily—that the daily mortality of China would drain England of its population in two years, London in four months, and your Manchester in nine days. Do you believe that these millions upon millions of adults are sinking into hopeless misery as they depart this life? If you do, then I do ask, in the name of God, why don't you send missionaries out to save them? If you do, why is it that you do not go out yourselves to try and save them from such a terrible calamity?

"'Well, but I do not believe,' another man says, 'in the old view. I believe in the destruction of men after a certain period of probation or punishment; I believe that they are blotted out of existence or shrivelled up into nothing.' I have been compelled to put this question to myself, 'Granted that this is the Biblical view, what then? Do you go on with your missionary life?' And I have come to the conclusion that, if this is the true view, I can draw from it sufficient motive to go on with my missionary life. Here is a soul, capable of



dwelling forever with God. Here is a soul capable of eternal existence, of eternal blessedness and happiness, capable of extending into a seraph, shrivelling up into nothing, or blotted out of existence. What would the blotting out of ten thousand worlds be compared with the blotting out of one soul? I do not know how you feel, but I feel that it would be worth my while going round and round the world in order to save one from such collapse.

"Then there comes the universal restoration view. Some say, 'I do not believe in the old or the second view, but I believe that all souls shall be restored at last.' What then? I am glad to be able to tell you I have looked at that view in its face, and I have come to the conclusion that I can draw even from that view sufficient motive to go on with my missionary work. Suppose, for instance, an angel were to come to me when I lay my head upon my pillow this evening, and whisper these words in my ear, 'Brother, all souls are to be restored at last; all the heathen are to be restored at last; the Chinese are to be restored at last. You are only just beginning your missionary work, there is a long, long missionary life before you; your work in China is a mere school in which you are preparing yourself for a grander work by and by.' What would be the effect of it upon my mind? To paralyze my hand? To prevent me going back to China? No, on the contrary, I feel that if an angel were to reveal that to me as the truth of God, the spark of missionary enthusiasm in my heart to-day would burst into a flame.

"I should reason in this way, 'Is it so? Can it be that the human soul is worth so much? Can it be that human souls are so dear to the heart of the Father? Can it be that that great atonement can cover all guilt, and that that mighty Spirit contains all souls?' If this be true—if it be true that all souls are to be redeemed, then I go in for the missionary life, not only for this aeon, but for aeons of aeons until the Christ of whom we have heard so much these days has put all His enemies under His feet, and presented the kingdom to God the Father."

We need not cite further cases.

“Them that honor Me, I will honor,” and what truth so vindicates God’s character and honor as this of God’s wondrous plan and its complete success? Again we say, “Buy the truth, and sell it not.”



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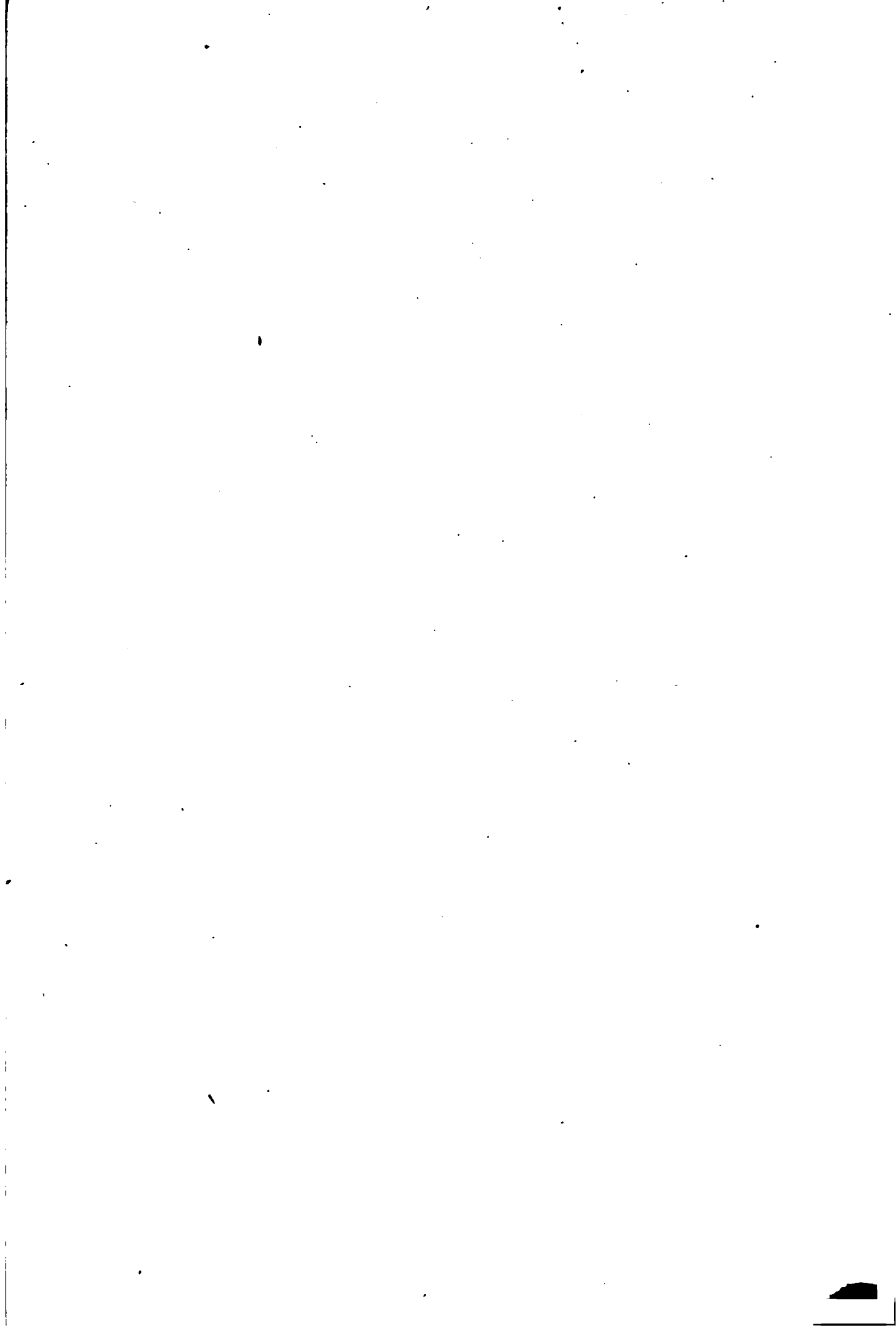
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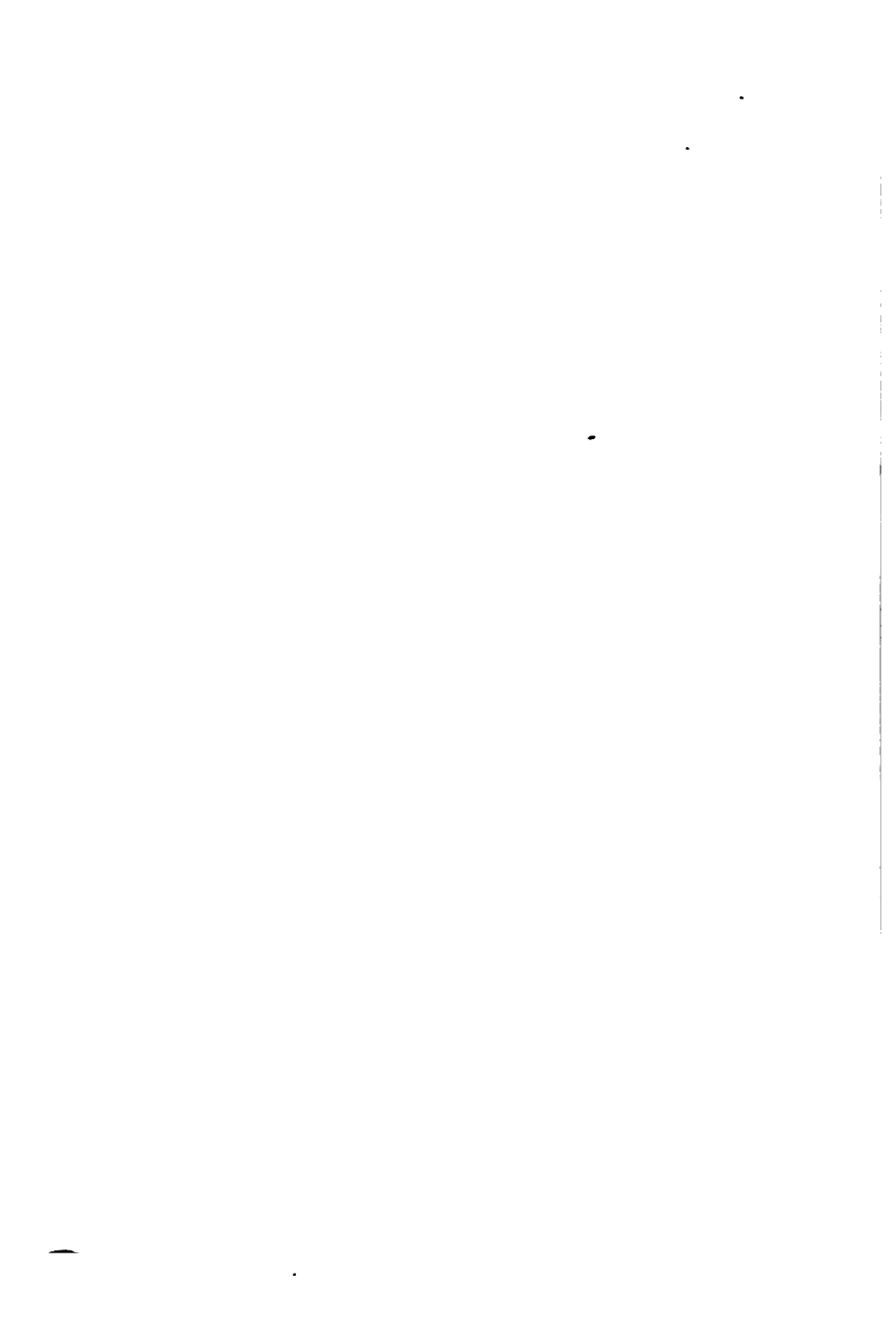


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